Think of What You're Saying: Mapping the Evolution and Impact of the Beatles' Lyrical Approaches to Gender in 1965-1966

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the evolution of the Beatles' lyrics focusing on gender. Placing their work in social and historical context, this thesis examines the shifting relationship between the Beatles and their largely female fanbase by focusing on two key questions: 1) how did the Beatles' lyrical approaches to gender change over time, and what insight does this give historians into how the Beatles shaped history, specifically in connection to their involvement with the counterculture, and 2) given the Beatles' quasi-religious, young female fanbase, how did the band's evolution of portrayal and representation of gender impact their fans? In addressing these questions, I employ historical, musicological and gender theory lenses to the Beatles music, fanbase, and historical context in order to provide the interdisciplinary approach this cultural study requires.

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INTRODUCTION

At fourteen years old in 1963, Melanie Coe had the chance of a lifetime to meet Paul McCartney after winning a prize on the show *Ready, Steady, Go*. To her disappointment, all she won was a signed copy of *Please Please Me*; the previous winners had won a date with a member of the Beatles, so naturally a measly LP was underwhelming. Nevertheless, the producers were impressed with Melanie and offered her a position as a background dancer on the show, introducing her to celebrities and the London scene. By seventeen, Melanie was fully immersed in London nightlife thanks to her encounter with the Beatles, sneaking out of her parents' home to go to discos and parties, no longer satisfied with the life of a school girl. One day, Melanie decided to run away from home. The Daily Mail published an article, "A-Level Girl Dumps Car and Vanishes," which Paul McCartney read on 27 February 1967. The article title caught this Beatle's eye, prompting him to write a song that would make it onto the band's ground-breaking album, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*: "She's Leaving Home."[1]

The incredible story above represents the intricate interlacing of the Beatles' legacy with their fans. Melanie's life was influenced by the Beatles, and in turn the Beatles' career was influenced by Melanie's life. Melanie's experience, though by no means an average tale of a Beatlemaniac, is a microcosm for the Beatles' relationship with their fans. The significance of Beatlemania to the Beatles' career cannot be overstated, and neither can the significance of the Beatles to the young female fans whose lives they changed forever. To their fans, the Beatles were more than idols, they were symbols of freedom (though, on the other hand, the Beatles were prisoners to their fans). Because the Beatles' religious following of young women turned them into symbols of sexual revolution, the Beatles' legacy is inherently gendered at its core. The politics of this gendered core, however, evolved over time, changing as quickly and frequently and passionately as the 1960s.

1965 and 1966 were particularly transitional years for the Beatles and the world around them. These years marked a turning point in the band's career from the mop-top pop stars of unprecedented fame to shaggy-haired experimental artists (of still equally unprecedented fame), growing out of their "boy-band" phase and into their "psychedelic" era. There are a plethora of reasons, aids, and markers for the Beatles' growth in these two

[1] Craig Brown, *One Two Three Four: The Beatles in Time*, (London: 4th Estate, 2020), 86-88.

years, which will be explored later. The largest, and perhaps most obvious, result from the Beatles' transition in this period is a great change in their music, most particularly in their lyrics. As the band underwent their transition into more serious writers, the lyrics of their songs grew increasingly complex, which is especially evident when listening to their songs that reference women. By mapping and examining the Beatles' approach to women in their songs, this paper is to consider the impact of the band's evolving lyrics on their fanbase. What did it mean to the fans swept up in Beatlemania that their favourite band was starting to sing about taxes, drug experiences, and "the word," rather than boys and girls falling in and out of love? How did their interaction and relationship with the band change along with these songs? How did, if at all, fans make sense of messages in songs like "In My Life" and "Run for Your Life" in the same album? And, finally, how did the experiences of fans during these transitional years compare and contrast between the United Kingdom and the United States?

To answer these questions, this paper will begin with a brief snapshot of the Beatles' historic timeline during 1965 and 1966, follow with an in-depth reading of significant songs from these two years, and end by examining records of fans' opinions of the band and their work during and after this transitional period. Through a combination of historiographical, musicological, and gender studies methodological approaches, this essay investigates the transformation of the Beatles' lyric writing with focus on their treatment of women. Moreover, this essay also works to expose the lack of application of gender studies to the scholarship on countercultural music of the 1960s, to reveal, and attempt to close, a gap in Beatle and countercultural scholarship in the examination of references and approaches to women in the rock and roll music of the 1960s.

0.1 The Beatles Until 1965

Because the Beatles and their fans grew up in the aftermath of World War II, their outlook on the world was vastly different from that of their parents' generation. They grew up in what could be considered a fearful society, afraid of the looming Cold War, afraid of the Atomic Bomb, afraid of any deviation from mainstream society that may be indicative of communism. This fear produced the strict society that defined the 1950s, as well as the groundwork for the counterculture that would define the 1960s.[2] From their beginning, the Beatles were countercultural, their work counter to the strict lifestyles dictated by the

[2] For effects of the early Cold War era on American society, see William L O'Neill, *American High: The Years of Confidence, 1945-1960*, Richard Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, and Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound*.

consumerist 1950s.[3] Their music (not necessarily their lyrics, but their actual music) broke through race and class barriers and evoked emotional responses from their audience.[4] For example, their time in Hamburg between 1960 and 1962 provided them ample opportunity to fine-tune their live-performance skills due to their lively, demanding audiences, who introduced them to drugs, sex, and all the qualities of life in a red light district.[5] Upon their return to the UK, and then during their "invasion" of the US, the Beatles remained countercultural as they took African-American music and fed it back to white youth, as they took the wild live-performance techniques they learned in Hamburg and forced it upon their unsuspecting audiences. In this way, the Beatles provided an intense emotional release for their fans during their furious and vibrant live shows, again marking them as countercultural among a regulated and reserved mid-century society.[6]

Understanding the Beatles' roots highlights that, even during the height of Beatlemania and their commercialisation under Brian Epstein, the Beatles remained countercultural figures, not mainstream. I say this because it is easy to falsely categorise the Beatles as participants *only* in pop-culture because of their intense popularity and commercialisation, when, I argue, it is precisely these characteristics of the Beatles that also make them countercultural. The band's emotional grip on their large fanbase placed them as spokespersons for a younger generation that was dissatisfied with the older. Similarly, the band's economic success was a result of the historic shift of economic power from the older generation to the younger. Therefore, the Beatles could be seen as the essence of countercultural as they were vehicles for and drivers of such large generational shifts.[7]

This distinction is important to make because it indicates a difference in the purpose of the Beatles' music. If the Beatles aimed to fit into the mainstream music industry of the time, their focus would have remained on producing songs that worked perfectly as singles for radio airtime.[8] In the early years of their career, their focus was on perfecting their instrumentation, breaking the boundaries of *how* they played their songs, at the cost of their

[3] For effects of the early Cold War era on British society, see Bill Osgerby, *Youth in Britain since 1945*, James Obelkevich and Peter Catterall*, Understanding Postwar British Society*.
[4] Devin McKinney, "Rude Noises from the Bog," *Magic Circles: The Beatles in Dream and History*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), *passim.*
[5] Devin McKinney, "Rude Noises from the Bog," 43.
[6] Sptiz, Bob, "From *The Beatles: The Biography*," *Read the Beatles*, ed. June Skinner Sawyers, (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 41-42
[7] Ian Inglis, "Men of Ideas? Popular Music, Anti-Intellectualism and the Beatles," *The Beatles, Popular Music and Society: A thousand voices*, ed. Ian Inglis, (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 2000), 7.
[8] In the beginning of their work with Brian Epstein, many of their songs were recorded with the intention of being sold as singles. However, the Beatles' live performances and musical talents separated them from other artists at the time that would be considered only "mainstream."

lyrics. Until 1965, the band's lyrics are quite often cited by Beatle scholars as unimportant in comparison to the music of their songs.[9] Once their success was secured, they began to stretch their artistic capabilities, a freedom they were awarded with their fame. From seemingly small musical changes, such as releasing their first song that lasted longer than three minutes ("Ticket to Ride" in 1965) to the world's first "double A-side" single ("We Can Work it Out/Day Tripper" in 1965), to larger evolutions like purposefully using feedback for their first time ("I Feel Fine" in 1964) and their first released use of backwards tape ("Rain" in 1966), the Beatles used their commercial success to set new industry standards and make artistic breakthroughs. It was also during this time that the Beatles began to pay more attention to their lyrics, as will be explored in depth in the next section.

To reiterate, the Beatles' countercultural roots provided them the platform they needed for commercial success by positioning them as the voices and faces of the younger generation, whose economic power led the Beatles to their unprecedented stardom. Highlighting the band's significance in the counterculture is important when discussing their lyrical treatment of women because their ties to the counterculture provide a more nuanced understanding of their approach to the song writing process and the reception of their work from their audience. Even during the height of Beatlemania, the Beatles' intentions with their music were not, as is often told, to merely be the most famous or wealthiest musicians, but instead to explore and break the boundaries of their craft.[10] By being countercultural, their song writing process increasingly became more about exploring the world around them and inside themselves, thus their songs were written with the intention of introspection, like other countercultural artists at the time, rather than with focus on what song lyrics would sell best, a tactic used by more strictly pop artists. This is especially apparent during their significant lyrical transformations in 1965 and 1966 as these years serve as a bridge between the band's two major phases.

0.2 The Beatles in 1965

By 1965, the Beatles had already secured their place in history as one of the most popular bands of all time. Beatlemania had caught the world's attention as a countercultural

[9] Ian MacDonald, "Introduction: Fabled Foursome, Disappearing Decade," *Revolution in the Head: The Beatles' Records and the Sixties*, Third Edition (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2007), *passim*.

[10] When asked in an interview in 1982 if they created the band only to avoid jobs and get girls, McCartney answered, "It went beyond that pretty quickly. Almost as soon as me and John started writing together, we thought we could be the next great songwriting team...Looking back, it was always about the craft, the art of it. From early on, we always wanted to go in an artistic direction." Jon Wilde, "McCartney: My Life in the Shadow of the Beatles," *Read the Beatles*, ed. June Skinner Sawyers, (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 254.

phenomenon by enabling young people, particularly women, to be outwardly emotional rather than reserved or complacent, as strict mid-century society would have dictated. Further, Beatlemania had proven the immense economic power the youth held, forever changing the landscape of how pop music would be defined.[11] Since 1963 in the UK and 1964 in the US, the Beatles had become more than a pop band for their fans, they had been elevated to almost god-like figures who served as the voice and face of the younger generation.

The Beatles' career began to evolve in 1965 for a number of reasons. First and foremost, the band felt suffocated by the intensity of their fans and exhausted by their busy schedules.[12] Their unprecedented fame had become a sort of prison where they were locked into certain roles, unable to express themselves as individuals.[13] Until their later studio years, the Beatles were largely regarded as a complete unit rather than seen for each member's contributions to the band,[14] which is important when exploring the reception of their early songs versus that of their later songs. To escape their celebrity imprisonment, the Beatles turned to drugs, specifically marijuana, to ease their stress and re-spark their creativity, marking another change in their career.[15] Drugs were part of their interaction with other artists of the time, such as Bob Dylan, which kept the Beatles up to date on current developments in the music industry. Moreover, marijuana became a tool the Beatles used to think more creatively when approaching the subject of their lyrics.

Two other factors are linked to the transition of the Beatles career during 1965: their decision to retreat from the public eye and the fact that they were growing older. Though the Beatles officially stopped touring in August 1966, they had already begun withdrawing from public appearances in 1965. To ease their hectic schedules and allow them more breathing room from the media and their fans, the band stopped doing live interviews on television to market their new releases. Instead, they would show pre-recorded short films, in fact inventing what would become known today as music videos.[16] These videos allowed them to continue to market themselves under their image as dictated by Brian Epstein, while also providing them more free time to work on their music. Lastly, the Beatles' career in 1965

[11] Steve Earl, "The Ten Most Important Beatle Songs," *Read the Beatles*, ed. June Skinner Sawyers, (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 308-309.
[12] Episode Five, *The Beatles Anthology*, directed by Geoff Wonfor and Bob Smeaton (1995: EMI Records Apple Corps), DVD.
[13] Lennon, Cynthia, "The Beginning of the End," *A Twist of Lennon*, (New York: Avon Books, 1978), *passim*.
[14] Episode Four, *The Beatles Anthology.*
[15] Lennon, "The Beginning of the End," *passim*.
[16] Episode Five, *The Beatles Anthology*

became distinguished from their earlier years as their music began to reflect their maturity. Having begun their career as teenagers, their early songs echo their immaturity and youthful perception of the world around them. By 1965, they had gained more worldly experience, grown up, and all been in serious romantic relationships. Their songs during and after 1965 reflect this transition into adulthood as they become more lyrically sophisticated and complex.

0.3 Existing Scholarship

This transition is heavily documented in existing Beatles scholarship. Canonical Beatles texts like Bob Spitz's *The Beatles: The Biography*, Ian McDonald's *Revolution in the Head*, Philip Norman's *Shout!*, Peter Brown and Steven Gaines' *The Love You Make*, Devin McKinney's *Magic Circles*, and Hunter Davies' *The Beatles: The Authorised Biography* all spend considerable time discussing the evolution of the Beatles' music and reputation during 1965 and 1966.[17] However, few texts exist that make a significant effort to connect the Beatles' transitions with their female fanbase, or even centre the story of Beatlemaniacs within the Beatles' legacy. Barbara Ehrenreich's chapter "Beatlemania" in her book *Re-Making Love* serves as one of the earliest serious considerations of the gender politics at play in Beatlemania, connecting the phenomenon with sexual liberation. Sheila Whiteley and Jaqueline Warwick's contributions to *The Beatles Revolver and the Transformation of Rock and Roll* also provide insight into the reception of the Beatles' gendered lyrics, while works like Whiteley's *Women and Popular Music*, Gretchen Lemke-Santangelo's *Daughters of Aquarius*, Virginia Nicholson's *How Was it for You*?, and Lisa Robinson's *Nobody Ever Asked Me About the Girls* are examples of the extensive work that exists on gender in the rock and roll and counterculture industry as a whole, many of which cite the Beatles frequently. These texts are important in their contribution to exposing the gendered roots of rock and roll, and as such do not discuss Beatlemania exclusively, leaving room for more nuanced analysis of the Beatles fans specifically.

Few first-hand accounts of Beatlemania exist, making analysis of the impacts on the band's lyrical evolution on their fans difficult. Currently, salient primary sources like Beatles Book Monthly serve as the closest documentation to the Beatlemaniac perspective at the time of Beatlemania. Patricia Gallo-Stenman's *Diary of a Beatlemaniac* is a wonderfully

[17] Beatle scholarship is incredibly extensive; it is impossible to account for every work ever published on the band. Moreover, this field constantly continues to grow. For example, Craig Brown's One Two Three Four, published in 2020, will, I argue, make its way into Beatles canon shortly. This very recent publication *does* include several first-hand accounts of Beatlemania and insight into the young female minds of the Beatle Maniacs. It is my hope that, by the time this thesis is finished, this listing of existing scholarship will be in need of updating.

personal look into a single girl's experience within Beatlemania while coming of age, but is difficult to use for academic analysis alone as a narrow, individual narrative. Nevertheless, as primary accounts of Beatlemania are few and far between, Gallo-Stenman's work is still an integral piece of the Beatlemaniac puzzle that remains unfinished in Beatle scholarship.[18]

The following chapters will utilise the above texts as starting points for examining the evolution of the Beatles' art, fanbase, and the intersectionality between the two in attempts to give Beatlemania the close examination it deserves. Building on these existing scholarships, I hope to fill in gaps where fans are left behind in the story of the Beatles and their legacy and offer a different way to remember and learn about the story of the band, a way that highlights the gender politics of their fame and centres their female fans. The first chapter will examine the music written and released by the Beatles in 1965 and 1966, utilising songs from both before and after this period to demonstrate the band's lyrical transitions. The second chapter switches gears to conduct a close analysis of Beatles Book Monthly as a primary source of Beatlemania, drawing on the lyrical timeline discussed in the first chapter to portray parallels in evolutions with band's fanbase. Finally, the third chapter seeks to situate the analysis of the band's 1965-1966 releases and Beatles Book Monthly issues within existing gender theory on the band, the rock and roll music industry, and the counterculture. In this look into the gendered core of the Beatles' legacy, I hope to convey the importance of women to the Beatles' career by centring those who are often left out of the band's story: the Beatlemaniacs.

[18] It is interesting, and perhaps telling, to note that almost all of the aforementioned 'canonical' texts that refrain from discussing the gender politics of the Beatles in depth are written by men, while the scholarships that do work to unpack the Beatles' relationship with gender, or the music industry's relationship with gender as a whole, are primarily written by women. I make this distinction because it begs the question, "Why?" Are male scholars less enamored with the pathos of the Beatles' legacy, more focused on the logos? If these male scholars are considered canonical, the starting points for Beatle scholarship, how does their approach and perspective of the Beatles' legacy shape the perception of Beatle fans? In other words, I make this distinction because it is imperative, as in any historical analysis, to consider who is telling the story, what story they are telling and why, and, just as importantly, what story they are *not* telling.

CHAPTER ONE: THE MUSIC

The following sections will provide an analysis of the lyrics from key songs released between 1965 and 1966. I will compare and contrast songs released during these two years with other songs released both earlier and later to help demonstrate the band's change over time. The analysis will be conducted in a somewhat chronological order, however, for the sake of understanding these songs in the larger context of the Beatles' overall discography, the order may vary some as I group certain songs together based on subject matter. Finally, the following analysis is intended to focus only on the lyrics and, only when necessary, will refer to the music in combination to the lyrics. While, of course, the Beatles' instrumentation is highly significant to their legacy, examination of their musical evolutions is beyond the purpose of this essay.[19]

The Beatles' two main phases, their early boy-band pop sound and their later psychedelic, experimental music, are bridged by two key studio albums: *Rubber Soul*, released in December 1965, and *Revolver*, released in August 1966. The differences in sound, production, compilation, and presentation between the albums that bookend *Rubber Soul* and *Revolver*, *Help!* (their first album in 1965) and *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (their first album in 1967) are staggering; the two albums, though only separated by two years, sound like they were created by entirely different bands. To undergo such dramatic transitions in such a short period of time means that their pivotal albums, *Rubber Soul* and *Revolver*, hold significant insights into the Beatles' changing approaches to music and lyric writing. Many Beatle scholars concur that *Revolver* was one of the Beatles' most transitional albums, heralding in a new image and sound for the band for the rest of their career. Some Beatle scholars also cite *Rubber Soul*'s significance as a stepping-stone for the Beatles' entrance into their more experimental phase.[20] The scholarly focus on the Beatles' studio albums, however, overlooks a significant chunk of the Beatles' discography: their singles. At this point in their career, while they were beginning to shift their focus to producing albums that functioned as a whole rather than a collection of songs, the Beatles were still releasing singles as a key method of ensuring radio airtime. Therefore, careful attention needs to be paid to the singles the band released between *Beatles for Sale* (their last album in 1964) and *Sgt. Pepper's*, which include:

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[19] See Simon Frith, *Performing Rites* for information on alternative methods for studying music that go beyond lyrical analysis. For work on the Beatles' musical developments, see Ian MacDonald's *Revolution in the Head: The Beatles' Records and the Sixties*.

[20] James M Decker, "Rubber Soul and the transformation of pop," *The Cambridge Companion to the Beatles*, ed. Kenneth Womack (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 75-89.

- "Eight Days a Week"/ "I Don't Want to Spoil the Party" (US, February 1965)
- "Ticket to Ride"/ "Yes It Is" (UK and US, April 1965)
- "Help!"/ "I'm Down" (UK and US, July 1965)
- "Yesterday"/ "Act Naturally" (US September 1965)
- "We Can Work It Out"/ "Day Tripper" (UK and US December 1965)
- "Nowhere Man"/ "What Goes On" (US, February 1966)
- "Paperback Writer"/ "Rain" (US and UK, May/June 1966, respectively)
- "Eleanor Rigby"/ "Yellow Submarine" (US and UK Aug 1966)[21]

So, while credit is most often given to *Rubber Soul* and *Revolver* as the key transitional productions that marked the evolution of the Beatles' career, I argue that the singles released during this time are also significant and that they unveil that the Beatles' lyrical maturation began earlier than *Rubber Soul*. Therefore, this essay's exploration of the Beatles' evolution will begin with examination of a single released prior to *Rubber Soul*: "Ticket to Ride"/ "Yes it is."

1.1 Pre-*Rubber Soul*

Prior to *Rubber Soul*, nearly every song the Beatles wrote and released revolved around the subject of love, somewhere on the spectrum between being about the idealisation of or disillusionment with romance.[22] Approaches to women in the Beatles' early songs were usually stories of courtship in which the narrator seeks to win the affection or attention of a woman. These kinds of songs appealed to the Beatles' growing young female fanbase as

[21] It is necessary to note the differences between US and UK releases of Beatles' singles and albums. Until their release of *Revolver* in August 1966, every studio album released by the Beatles varied between the US and the UK. The UK versions of their full LPs were intentionally produced and compiled by the band themselves, while the US versions were changed by the record company without the Beatles' consultation. The result is a difference in timeline and experience of the Beatles music between the US and the UK. For example, *Beatles For Sale* was released in the UK and included "Eight Days a Week" and "I Don't Want to Spoil the Party." In the US, *Beatles '65* was released in the place of *Beatles For Sale*, which did not include the two aforementioned songs. This is why those songs were later released as a single in the US and not in the UK. Another example is *Rubber Soul*: the order of songs is completely different between the *Rubber Soul* released in the UK and the one released in the US. Where the UK version begins with "Drive My Car," a novel song in subject matter and delivery, the US version of the album starts with "I've Just Seen a Face," a more typical Beatles song, lyrically speaking, that was pulled from their earlier discography. These differences between the Beatles' records in the UK and the US complicate how we can understand the band's impact between the two countries. To unpack this complication, I will first analyse the Beatles' work based on their UK releases because they are the albums and singles that were released as the Beatles intended for them to be heard. When I examine fans' reception of their transitional work, I will then address how fans' experiences were different between the two countries, and why this difference may or may not be significant.

[22] See Appendix Figure 1.

they could imagine themselves being the subject of the song.[23] Many early Beatle songs are characterised by offering the feeling of face-to-face interactions, personal conversations to which listeners are privy.[24] As Guy Cook and Neil Mercer articulate in their chapter "From Me to You: Austerity and Profligacy in the Language of the Beatles," the band's early songs almost always contained a conversation between three different combinations of pronouns: "I talking to you; I talking to you about her; I talking about her."[25] Further, they argue, that "the very indeterminacy of these pronouns, however, while it gives a sense of access into the thoughts, emotions, and interaction of an individual, also simultaneously allows the reference to be generalized to any male or female enmeshed in the pairings and triangles of romantic heterosexual relationships."[26] In other words, the tone of early Beatle songs, with their unnamed characters and ordinary conversations, were incredibly relatable for their listeners, which added to their popularity.

By 1965, however, the Beatles were beginning to deviate from their previous patterns. According to Cook and Mercer,

> There are also subtle but specific changes in the grammar and vocabulary of the songs, and these affect their nature and discourse. Whereas the communicative contexts evoked by the earlier songs tend to be conversation, argument, gossip or soliloquy, the later songs are often concerned with storytelling and with philosophizing.[27]

While the majority of the Beatles' songs in 1965 were still on the subject of romantic love, their attitudes and articulations of romantic love were beginning to change, as indicated by the shifts in their word choice. Because their songs always described heterosexual relationships, this means that, by proxy, their attitudes towards women were also changing. The earliest example of this can be seen in their 1965 single "Ticket to Ride" with its B-Side "Yes It Is." "Ticket to Ride" is an important song in the Beatles career most simply for being their first track to last longer than three minutes, indicating a step away for the band from

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[23] There is an important and understated link between the Beatles' early lyrical word choice and their admiration as a band for girl-groups. Many of their early songs were written based on the dialogue and pronouns used by female singers in similar songs. There is a current debate that the influence of girl-groups on the Beatles' early songwriting shows that the band was androgynous in its early years, while others say the band made androgyny impossible by appropriating girl-group music. For further reading on this subject, see Barbara Bradby, "She Told Me What to Say," published in *Popular Music and Society*, Vol. 28, No. 3, July 2005, 359-390.

[24] Guy Cook and Mercer, Neil, "From Me to You: Austerity and Profligacy in the Language of the Beatles," *The Beatles, Popular Music and Society: A thousand voices*, ed. Ian Inglis, (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 2000), 90.

[25] *Ibid.* 91.

[26] *Ibid.*

[27] *Ibid.* 88.

writing songs that were fit for radio air-time. More significantly, however, is the song's approach to its subject matter. Though the subject of "Ticket to Ride" is the loss of romantic love, the articulation and presentation of that loss is novel for a Beatles song. Previously, in songs like "Baby's In Black," "I'll Cry Instead," and "Don't Bother Me," the lyrical articulation of pain is very simple: "Oh dear, what can I do / baby's in black / and I'm feeling blue;" "I've got every reason on earth to be mad / 'cause I just lost the only girl I had / if I could get my way, I'd get myself locked up today / but I can't, so I'll cry instead;" and, "Since she's been gone I want no one to talk to me / it's not the same but I'm to blame / it's plain to see," respectively. The intentions of these types of songs are to express frustration and pain, and they do so in a way that exhibits a very basic understanding of loss.

Moreover, though the pain in these songs is caused by a woman leaving the narrator, the woman is barely discussed in the story. The extent of her existence is that she left, the narrator makes no indication of what made her leave him. "Ticket to Ride" differs in this way: the purpose of the song is for the narrator to try to make sense of *why* she is leaving him. For the first time *ever* in a Beatles' song, the focus is on the woman's desires. Granted, her desires are only mentioned in how they affect the male narrator, but the fact remains the same that this is the first song the Beatles wrote that shows understanding of a woman's autonomy, of her wants and needs. This novel sentiment for a Beatles' song comes up again in their later work, such as "You're Going to Lose that Girl" on *Help!*, a song which reprimands another man for not meeting the needs of his partner, and the single "We Can Work it Out," the first Beatle song that expresses a desire to work through relationship troubles by meeting the narrator's partner half way.

Another innovative single released in 1965 is "Help!/ "I'm Down." "Help!" stands as the first ever original Beatle track that makes no explicit reference to romantic love. Though it could still be interpreted as being directed to a partner in the lines, "Help me if you can I'm feeling down / and I do appreciate you being 'round," there is no female pronoun present in the song. For the Beatles, this song indicates a step away from romantic themes and towards introspective topics in song writing. For the first time in an original Beatle song, a woman is neither explicitly present nor desired. Moreover, "Help!" is often interpreted by fans and scholars alike as a confessional song, a literal cry for help amidst the chaos of Beatlemania.[28] While the band had previously written other songs also considered to be confessional, like "I'm a Loser," these songs still retained overarching themes of romance

[28] MacDonald*, Revolution in the Head*, 153.

and relations with women. Thus, "Help!" marks an important turning point in the Beatles' song writing process as they begin to use their lyrics to convey more personal emotions rather than replicate songs about romance.

Though the Beatles take a step forward in evolving their lyrical process, they take two steps back with their release of the *Help!* LP. As a sort of soundtrack for their second film, also titled *Help!*, the Beatles' first studio album of 1965 was comprised mostly of songs that were reminiscent of their older themes. Songs like "The Night Before," "I Need You," It's Only Love," "You Like Me Too Much," and "I've Just Seen a Face" maintain the same thematic range as the band's earlier work. One song does stand out, however, for its novel approach to women and relationships. "You're Going to Lose That Girl" is only the second Beatle songs where the narration is explicitly directed towards another man (the first song being "She Loves You"). Here, the narrator is reprimanding another man for not treating his partner well, saying, "If you don't treat her right, my friend / you're going to find her gone." These lyrics indicate an understanding of the importance of treating one's partner well and exhibits a call for men to appreciate their partners' needs. Unfortunately, this is where the novelty of the song ends, as the lyrics continue to treat the woman as an object that can be passed around from man to man without autonomy. The narrator continues to threaten, "You're going to lose that girl / if you don't take her out to night / she's going to change her mind / and I will take her out tonight / and I will treat her kind." In this refrain, the woman's desires are not mentioned or acknowledged. Where the song recognised the necessity of meeting a partners' needs, it could have continued to support women's autonomy in allowing the partner to make her own decision in regard to their relationship. Instead, the narrator says he will change her mind for her, indicating that if he steps in, she will have no other option than to leave her partner and go with the narrator. Not only is this egotistical on the narrator's part, but it suggests that women cannot decide what is best for themselves when it comes to their relationships, which is a pity because "You're Going to Lose that Girl" was so close to recognising women's needs and desires like "Ticket to Ride."

Outside of the small albeit significant indications of lyrical transitions in "You're Going to Lose that Girl," as well as "Help!" and "Ticket to Ride," which were also included on the album, the remainder of songs on *Help!* continued to use the band's older techniques, storylines and pronouns to convey messages of romantic love.[29] Their next single, however,

[29] Though the album *Help!* employed the band's older style of songwriting, the film *Help!* differed greatly in its portrayal of women than their first film*, A Hard Day's Night*. With only one main female character in *Help!*, rather than the swarms of screaming girls seen in *A Hard Day's Night*, the film

would take them further into their lyrical maturation. "We Can Work It Out"/ "Day Tripper" was released on the same day as *Rubber Soul* in December 1965. "We Can Work It Out" is a notable track in the Beatles' discography for quite a few reasons. First, when recording "We Can Work It Out," the Beatles spent a record amount of time in the studio for working on one track, clocking in at just under twelve hours.[30] This, in contrast to their previous ability to record an entire album in one day like with *Please Please Me*, shows a dedication to one individual song not seen before, indicating a change in the Beatles' song writing process to take more care in how their songs were delivered.[31]

Secondly, "We Can Work It Out" is considered to be one of the greatest, and most stark, examples of McCartney and Lennon's song writing collaboration in the studio.[32] As the lyrics between verses and middle-eights shift between McCartney's realistic dialogue and Lennon's philosophical lyrics, the song points in a direction that would lead to the Beatles' songs being heard for the band members individual contributions rather than the band being seen as a whole, operating as one unit. This is significant in the reception of Beatles songs in the latter half of their career, and, although it is not something that would be fully realised until much later, each subsequent single and album released after "We Can Work It Out" would progress in the direction of recognising the band members for their individual contributions to songs. In following with audience reception of the band, where applicable, this essay will begin to note later songs for their specific songwriters rather than view tracks as written by the band equally, as a whole. This will become important when grouping songs based on subject matter and language in their treatment of women as it becomes evident that certain band members had certain methods of addressing gender in their lyrics.

"We Can Work It Out" offers a more nuanced understanding of relationships than any previous Beatle song. The result of twelve hours in the studio and of intense collaboration between Lennon and McCartney, the song discusses a troubled relationship in

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indicates a difference in the role of women in the Beatles' life by 1965 than just a year earlier when the first film was released. For more information on the significance of the film *Help!*, see Stephanie Fremaux, *The Beatles On Screen: From Pop Stars to Musicians*.

[30] MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head*, 171.

[31] It has been recorded in *The Beatles Anthology* that the Beatles were constantly using marijuana at this point and that their drug use impaired their productivity, and therefore it could also be argued that the amount of time spent in the studio on this song was due to their drug use rather than care for the song. I argue, however, that if they were high on marijuana during these twelve hours, the drug would have aided their creativity. In other words, their drug use may have affected their time management, but at the same time it boosted their creativity and contemplation in the songwriting process.

[32] *Ibid.*

which the two partners do not see eye to eye. This subject is nothing new to a Beatle song; "Misery," "Don't Bother Me," and "The Night Before" all discuss a rift in a relationship. These earlier songs, however, all give up on the relationship at the hint of an argument or misunderstanding, making no attempt to talk things through with the narrator's partner. Alternatively, "We Can Work It Out" attempts to mend the relationship where the narrator implores his partner to work with him to, well, work it out. Moreover, "We Can Work It Out" echoes the recognition of a woman's autonomy in "Ticket to Ride." Where "Ticket to Ride" attempts to understand why the woman is leaving the relationship, "We Can Work It Out" goes a step further, trying to appreciate the partner's grievances *and* rectify the situation. This lyrical shift to understand a woman's needs *and* a desire to meet them indicates a viewing of women as equals and a deeper appreciation for women as people rather than romantic objects. This respect for women is repeated in later songs, mostly written by McCartney, like "Wait" and, more simplistically, "Hello Goodbye."

As these three singles from 1965 have indicated, the Beatles had slowly been implementing more mature lyrics and subject matter into their songs far earlier than *Rubber Soul.* "Ticket to Ride," "Help!" and "We Can Work it Out" all convey a shifting understanding for women and romantic relationships. Where "Ticket to Ride" and "We Can Work It Out" portray a more respectful and mindful approach to women in relationships, "Help!" also heralds in the Beatles' shift away from relying on romantic subject matter in songs. *Rubber Soul*, like *Help!*, faces both directions, dually forward to lyrical maturation and backwards to simplistic pop love songs. However, the ratio of old to new methods of song writing shifts in *Rubber Soul*, serving as the Beatles' first album to have multiple original songs with non-romantic subjects and a minority of songs that utilise the band's former pop-love song lyrical style.

1.2 *Rubber Soul*

The release of *Rubber Soul* was a defining moment in the Beatles career. In its time, the album was a number one hit, topping the US Billboard charts at number one for six weeks and remaining on the chart for over a year at sixty-three weeks.[33] In retrospect, the album is considered the moment in the Beatles career that elevated the band from pop-musicians to serious and innovative artists. Even further, *Rubber Soul* gave new meaning to the concept of an album. Whereas before albums had been produced as a collection of songs

[33] Joel Whitburn, *Joel Whitburn Presents Top Pop Albums* (Menomonee Falls: Record Research Inc, 2010), 64.

with little regard given to the order of the tracks, *Rubber Soul* was the Beatles' first album intentionally constructed to be listened to as a whole, from start to finish, in order.[34] The songs were organised to work together collectively rather than individually or separately.[35] This is significant when trying to analyse these songs for their lyrical messages about women, particularly when examining the contrast between start of the album with "Drive My Car" and its finish with "Run For Your Life."

Rubber Soul is a continuation of the band's evolution into more purposeful songwriters who carefully considered their lyrics. As James M Decker notes in his article "*Rubber Soul* and the transformation of pop," the Beatles found ways to "smuggle" their newly sophisticated lyrics to their listeners in a way that "enable[d] more passive fans to enjoy the song[s]…while more active listeners may marvel at the subversion of the most basic tenet of the pop ethos: the idealization of the love relationship."[36] Decker's article offers a fantastically close analysis of each song included on the UK version of *Rubber Soul* by examining the lyrics in relation to the music of the songs. Decker cites a rather unsuspecting song as one of the largest markers of the Beatles' lyrical transitions: "Drive My Car." As the opening song for the album, "Drive My Car," on the surface, is a comedic song, a new style of songs the Beatles were experimenting with at this time. Dig a little deeper, however, as Decker does, and it becomes apparent that "Drive My Car" is incredibly novel for its style of narration. For the first time in a Beatles song, the male narrator's interaction with a woman allows the woman to express herself in a way that does not focus strictly on the preoccupation of love:

> In [their] earlier songs, the Beatles almost universally objectify the narrator's lover and focus on how love or its dissolution makes him feel (or, alternatively, how the narrator believes he can make her feel). "Drive My Car," by contrast, establishes a dialogue in which the female announces *her* dreams and desires…Love, while still present as an idealized state that the female may withhold, fades to the background, as the lover expresses her true desire to "be famous, a star on the screen."[37]

Seen in this way, the lyrics of "Drive My Car" offer insight into the evolution of the Beatles' approach to women in their songs as they acknowledge women's autonomy by allowing the narrator's desires to take a "back seat" to the woman's in the story. Never before

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[34] William McKeen, *The Beatles: A Bio-Bibliography* (Westport: Greenwood Press, Inc, 1989), 63.

[35] As noted, this complicates our understanding of the reception of the US version of *Rubber Soul* because the order of its songs was completely changed by the record company, who even added and removed certain songs from the record. This incongruency will be discussed later. For now, reference Appendix 1 for the UK order of the songs, the intended order.

[36] Decker, "Rubber Soul and the transformation of pop," 78.

[37] *Ibid.*

has a woman been so free to make her own decisions in a Beatles song. Moreover, for once, the woman's relation to a man is inconsequential: it does not matter whether or not the woman in "Drive My Car" ends up having a sexual or romantic relationship with the narrator, nor does it matter if she has such relations with another man. Before "Drive My Car," every Beatle song telling the story between a man and a woman relied on the woman's relationship to a man, any man, whether it was the narrator or someone else.

For example, many previous Beatle songs were told from the narrator's perspective as he chastised or grieved over a woman's interaction with another man. This is seen in the grief expressed in "No Reply" with, "I nearly died / 'cause you walked hand in hand / with another man / in my place," and "Baby's in Black" with, "I think of her / but she thinks only of him/ and though it's only a whim / she thinks of him," as well as the anger seen in "You Can't Do That" with, "If I catch you talking to that boy again / I'm gonna let you down / and leave you flat / because I told you before / oh, you can't do that." *Rubber Soul* concludes with a song that resembles the older possessiveness and objectification of women shown in the examples above. The final song on the album, "Run for Your Life," is notoriously one the most violent and misogynistic songs in the Beatles' discography, which this paper will return to soon.

The next song to appear on *Rubber Soul* is the innovative "Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)," considered to be the first Beatles song where the lyrics were more important than the music.[38] With its debut of the sitar in a Beatles' song, "Norwegian Wood" has a uniquely contemplative sound from the start. The song maintains this tone with its softly sung lyrics that describe a story where the narrator expects to have sex with a woman after coming to her apartment but is met with disappointment when she rejects his advances. At first, the song seems to respect the woman's right to say no; the narrator sleeps in the bath rather than leaving or pressuring the woman to change her mind. However, the song ends violently with the narrator hinting that he left after setting the woman's apartment on fire, saying, "So I lit a fire / isn't it good, Norwegian wood?" Though the track has been considered to be another attempt by the band to write a comedic song,[39] its mixed messages leave listeners wondering if the violence emitted by the narrator is real.

The messages of other songs that speak of women on *Rubber Soul* are less cryptic

[38] MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head,* 163.
[39] *Ibid.* 162.

than in "Norwegian Wood." Decker notes that the storylines in both "I'm Looking Through You" and "Think For Yourself" express the narrator's frustration with his partner because she cannot keep up with him intellectually, that she is neither growing nor maturing as fast as him.[40] This suggests a prejudice within the Beatles that the women in their songs lack the same mental capacity of their male characters, and this theme recurs in later songs like "She Said She Said." These kinds of songs reinforce a message that men are intellectually superior to women and that women need the guidance of men in order to grow and mature. There are plenty of songs in the Beatles' repertoire where the male narrator offers a female counterpart intellectual advice, from "Love You To" and "Within You Without You" to "Dear Prudence," "Sexy Sadie," and "Martha My Dear." The only Beatle song that comes close to telling a story where a woman offers a man advice is "Let it Be," and, even then, the female advisor is not human, but rather an imagined spirit.

What can be gleaned, then, from the emergence and recurrence of songs like "Think For Yourself" and "I'm Looking Through You," is that the Beatles placed little faith in the mental capabilities of the women they created in their songs. Were the characters in their songs reflections of their real-life stance towards women? While such a question can only be speculated upon, the significance of such sentiment nevertheless remains: the vast number of young women gleefully listening to the Beatles were not hearing stories that spoke positively about their intellect. Rather, they were being told by their idols that their minds simply could not keep up.

On the other hand, songs like "Nowhere Man" suggest the same mental incapability in men as "Think for Yourself" and "I'm Looking Through You" see in women. As the second original Beatles song to not explicitly mention women, "Nowhere Man" indicates another step away from relying on romantic tales for lyrics and a step towards using introspection and contemplation for song writing. The same steps are taken in "The Word," which, though it repeatedly uses the word "love," is another non-romantic song on *Rubber Soul.* The emergence of more non-romantic songs in the Beatles' discography suggests that the band was beginning to assign less significance to romance. Whether this lessened significance of romance also meant a lessened importance of women is difficult to discern at this point as *Rubber Soul* still includes songs that nod back to the band's older pop songs like "You Won't See Me," "Michelle," and "What Goes On."

[40] Decker, "Rubber Soul and the transformation of pop," 81-82, 85-86.

Still, most of the songs on *Rubber Soul* that do speak of romance and women do so in a way that is novel for the Beatles. For example, "Girl" discusses an abusive woman, a subject explored in earlier songs like "Not a Second Time," "Tell Me Why," and "Honey Don't." However, "Girl" goes deeper, attempting to understand *why* the woman is so cruel by discussing her upbringing. This suggests, as seen in songs like "Ticket to Ride," an understanding that a woman can be a complex and multi-dimensional being (in contrast to songs like "Think For Yourself").

Meanwhile, songs on *Rubber Soul* like "In My Life," "Wait," and "If I Needed Someone" usher in a new understanding of relationships by acknowledging past, present and future partners. As discussed earlier with "Drive My Car," many older Beatle songs reprimanded women for having any kind of relationship with another man. However, the same rules did not apply to men; in songs like "If I Fell" with its verse, "If I give my heart to you / I must be sure / from the very start / that you would love me more than her," and the single "Yes It Is" with its refrain, "I could be happy with you by my side / if I could forget her," the narrator makes explicit references to his past relationships by comparing his current partner to them. Similarly, in songs like "Another Girl" and "I'll Follow the Sun," the narrator is openly noncommittal to his current partner: "You're making me say that I've got nobody but you / but as from today, well, I've got somebody that's new," and "Some day you'll know I was the one / but tomorrow may rain / so I'll follow the sun," respectively.

"In My Life," "Wait," and "If I Needed Someone" explore the idea of relationships coming and going more openly and equally, suggesting that women, too, may have multiple partners throughout their life. As Decker argues, "In earlier songs, love is unquestionably 'forever,' and even spurned lovers emphasize betrayal rather than a true loss of love," whereas, in these songs, "the narrator reveals a curious indifference to the ideal of eternal love."[41] "In My Life" and "If I Needed Someone" offer a new understanding of love as circumstantial and chronological rather than eternal: in the former song, the narrator reminisces about his past friends and lovers while describing his love for his current partner, while in the latter song the narrator recognises that his current relationship will likely not last forever, and thus welcomes the idea of having a relationship at some point with another girl who is currently vying for him. Similarly, "Wait" invites the narrator's partner to exert autonomy and to do what is best for her, saying "But if your heart breaks / don't wait, turn me away." All of these messages suggest an equalising respect for women and their role in

[41] *Ibid*. 87.

relationships and serve as significant markers in the Beatles' lyrical maturation. These efforts are shattered, however, in *Rubber Soul*'s closing song.

Perhaps the most violent and misogynistic song in their entire discography, the decision for the Beatles to close *Rubber Soul* with "Run for Your Life" is significant in its message about and to women.[42] In "Run for Your Life," the narrator threatens his partner's life if he catches her with another man:

> ...Well, you know that I'm a wicked guy
> And I was born with a jealous mind
> And I can't spend my whole life
> Trying just to make you toe the line
>
> You better run for your life if you can, little girl
> Hide your head in the sand, little girl
> Catch you with another man
> That's the end little girl
>
> Let this be a sermon
> I mean everything I've said
> Baby, I'm determined
> And I'd rather see you dead
> Little girl...[43]

These jealous lyrics are quite a step back from the progression the Beatles had made in their other songs on *Rubber Soul*. They incite violence as a method of control, promote manipulation and physical/verbal abuse, and objectify the woman by implying that she is the possession or property of the narrator, and therefore her every move is, and should be, under his control.

Few Beatle scholars attempt to make sense of "Run For Your Life's" lyrics, and among those that do touch on this song, most only mention its mediocre instrumentation. In *The Beatles: A Musical Evolution*, Terence O'Grady says, "'Run For Your Life' is a Lennon composition of which little needs to be said," followed by two sentences critiquing the song's instrumentation, with absolutely no reference to its lyrics.[44] In *Revolution in the Head*, Ian MacDonald describes it as a "lazily sexist song unmitigated by any saving

[42] For a close reading on "Run For Your Life" and its place as a countercultural song, see my article "Under My Thumb: The Perpetuation of Sexism in the Music of 1960s American Counterculture," *University of North Carolina at Asheville's Journal of Undergraduate Research*, May 2019.
[43] The Beatles, *Rubber Soul* (Parlophone, 1965).
[44] Terence J O'Grady, *The Beatles: A Musical Evolution* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1983), 85.

irony,"[45] Hunter Davies argues in his book *The Beatles Lyrics: The Stories Behind the Music*, "[Lennon] later seemed to regret the lyrics, saying the song was written under pressure, it was just a glib throwaway song, an example of his worst work,"[46] and in *The Beatles A Hard Day's Write: The Stories Behind Every Song*, Steve Turner ascribes the song's threatening message to John's attempt to indicate the depths of his love.[47] Even Decker avoids analysing this song as closely as he did the others in his article, saying, "The sheer over-the-top nature of the reaction in relation to the (unspecified) infraction...might look forward towards the Beatles' later use of parody...It is conceivable that the Beatles are in fact mocking their earlier efforts."[48] These descriptions from the most prominent Beatle scholars (all of whom happen to be male) only attempt to excuse the violence of "Run for Your Life," to explain away the misogyny rather than recognise it for what it is: a hateful and cruel song towards women that no doubt scared and hurt some of the Beatles' young female audience. Instead, they try to brush off "Run For Your Life" by designating it as a mediocre song musically, which must make it unimportant to fans and scholars alike. However, with such unapologetically violent lyrics and such a prominent placement on the album as the last song, on the Beatles' first album with the songs intentionally ordered no less, I refuse to accept that the lack of discourse surrounding "Run for Your Life" stems from its musical insignificance.

One Beatle scholar, Alex Cowan, however, does finally attempt to unpack the meaning behind "Run for Your Life" in his article "Murder, Apologism, and the Beatles:"

> Musically, 'Run For Your Life is unremarkable, which is partly what makes it so dangerous...'Run For Your Life's simplicity is entirely conscious...It is a simple song from a simple man, expressing plain (and, through this simplicity, *justified* [emphasis original]) desire... If Lennon's intent is parody, then, it does not come across very well: the musical simplicity and associated earnestness do nothing to problematise the lyrical topic evoked, but in fact solidify the associations the lyrics make between blues and country formulations of aggressive masculinity. 'Run For Your Life', then, is a performance of gender, channeled through musical and lyrical topics with deep social histories.[49]

Cowan's refreshing analysis of "Run For Your Life" suggests that the song is even more

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[45] MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head*, 162.
[46] Hunter Davies, *The Beatles Lyrics: The Stories Behind the Music, Including the Handwritten Drafts of More Than 100 Classic Beatles Songs* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2014), 135-136.
[47] Steve Turner, *The Beatles A Hard Day's Write: The Stories Behind Every Song* (New York: MJF Books, 1994), 153.
[48] Decker, "Rubber Soul and the transformation of pop," 88.
[49] Alex Cowan, "Murder, Apologism, and The Beatles, Blues semiotics in 'Run For Your Life,'" *Festival Peak*, 16 March 2014, https://festivalpeak.com/murder-apologism-and-the-beatles-a6a55f0636cf.

significant for precisely the same reason other Beatles scholars attempt to avoid discussing it: its simplistic instrumentation. Through its simple music and catchy melody, the harsh lyrics fly under the radar, so to speak, making the song easily forgotten retrospectively while also keeping it stuck in listeners' heads, almost subliminally.

It is difficult to place "Run For Your Life" in context with other Beatles songs because it is so uniquely violent. Other Beatles songs had lyrics that spoke of jealousy, like "You Can't Do That," or, in opposition to the narrator in "Run For Your Life," had narrators who boasted of their partner's fidelity, like "She's a Woman." Violence had been implied in songs like "Norwegian Wood," but never so explicitly threatened. Fortunately, never would such violence towards women or blatant misogyny be expressed again in a Beatles song. Though its uniqueness in no way excuses "Run For Your Life," its regressive theme does offer a more nuanced understanding for the Beatles' growth as songwriters by proving that they were still developing their song writing methods at this time. Moreover, it should be noted that, though it was placed last on the album, "Run For Your Life" was the first song written for *Rubber Soul*.[50] Thus, this overtly misogynistic song did not necessarily represent such a step back as its prominent closing placement on *Rubber Soul* suggests.

Nevertheless, "Run For Your Life" stands in stark contrast to its preceding songs on *Rubber Soul*. The autonomy suggested in "Drive My Car," "Wait," and the first part of "Norwegian Wood" are thrown out the window with the message of the album's closing track. Likewise, the equalising and realistic conceptions of love in "In My Life" and "If I Needed Someone" are completely ignored in "Run For Your Life." Though Decker's analysis of the song is largely unhelpful in finding a deeper understanding to its intention, he does remark that, "the song...poses as an odd choice as the culminating track on an album wherein the Beatles consciously treated the entire recording process as artistic venture."[51] He continues to offer an explanation for this odd choice that neatly sums up *Rubber Soul*'s placement in the Beatles' career:

> Rubber Soul both changes the ratio and adds further complexities, both musically (daring instrumentation, technological self-awareness) and narratologically (expanded thematic range, concrete characterization). Arguably, however, by retaining vestiges of their earlier aesthetic, the Beatles were able to earn concessions from both George Martin and his superiors.[52]

[50] MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head,* 162.
[51] Decker, "Rubber Soul and the transformation of pop," 88.
[52] *Ibid.*

In other words, the attempted balance between the Beatles' older and newer thematic range allowed them to ease their superiors and audience into their musical and lyrical transformation that would become even more realised in their next studio album, *Revolver*.

1.3 Between *Rubber Soul* and *Revolver*

The year 1966 was a turbulent time for the Beatles as a band and as individuals. In twelve months the band completed their touring years with final performances in the UK, Germany, Japan, the Philippines, and the US, recorded and released two singles and one studio album, and incited political and religious controversy around the world,[53] all while having the most holiday time since 1962.[54] As individuals, 1966 was no less eventful for the band members; with so much time off from touring and recording, Lennon became dependent on LSD and starred in the film *How I Won the War*, Harrison married Pattie Boyd and deepened his Eastern spirituality and music while in India, and McCartney developed his interest in the avant-garde art scene and had a car crash that would begin the "Paul is dead" controversy. The Beatles also used their newfound freedom for artistic exploration, consulting with other musicians like Bob Dylan and Donavan, reading contemporary psychedelic works such as Timothy Leary's *The Psychedelic Experience*, and following London's avant-garde art scene, which influenced their work, inspiring, for instance, the controversial "butcher baby" cover to their US record *Yesterday...and Today*.

The Beatles' experiences in 1966 re-grounded them in their countercultural roots as they stepped back from their mainstream pop music, boy-band image and immersed themselves in the evolving artistic scene around them. By the end of 1966, the Fab Four would dress, act, record, and perform differently than ever before. Moreover, their music and lyrics began to reflect their personal experiences with their world more deeply and contemplatively, exposing more fully the individual band members' contributions to songs than seen in the reception of their earlier work.

Their first release after *Rubber Soul,* the single "Paperback Writer / Rain," is a prime example of the direction the band was heading towards with their experimental music and lyrics. As their first single ever released without a song that explicitly related to romance, "Paperback Writer / Rain" continues the Beatles' move away from romantic lyrical themes

[53] Citizens of Manila started riots after the Beatles reportedly slighted Imelda Marcos in July and many Christians (around the world but mostly in the Southern states of the US) boycotted the Beatles after Lennon's infamous "more popular than Jesus quote" in August. See Steve Turner, *Beatles '66* for further details on these events.

[54] For a fantastically detailed account of the Beatles in 1966, see Steve Turner, *Beatles '66*.

that they began in *Rubber Soul*. "Paperback Writer" is one of the first songs categorised as McCartney's "character studies," where he takes on a specific character in his song (other examples include "Eleanor Rigby" and "Lovely Rita"). There are two references to women in "Paperback Writer," first when the narrator directs his plea to an authoritative figure, "Dear Sir or Madam, will you read my book?" and second when he describes the plot of his novel, "It's a dirty story of a dirty man / and his clinging wife doesn't understand."

These two references are brief and rather insignificant to the song overall, but they nonetheless paint two very different images of women: one as a person who has power over the narrator and his book, and the other who serves an annoying role in the plot of the narrator's tale. In this way, "Paperback Writer" deviates from previous Beatles songs by not idealising romantic relations with a woman or strictly viewing a woman as a romantic object. Therefore, the lyrics of "Paperback Writer" indicate an expansion of the Beatles' thematic range for their songs as well as an expansion of understanding of women's varying roles, however slight they may be.

The B-side of this single, "Rain," has no direct reference to women in its lyrics but is still one of the most significant markers of the Beatles' evolution at this time. First and foremost, "Rain" is notable for its musical innovation as the first *released* song with the use of backwards tape.[55] It is also considered to be one of the best recordings of the Beatles' talents as musicians, particularly for Ringo's drum solo and McCartney's inventive bass lines.[56] In addition to the innovative use of backwards tape, the lyrics of "Rain" set the Beatles as frontrunners in the emerging psychedelic movement. "Rain," written mostly by Lennon, implores listeners to pay close attention to their "state of mind," saying, "Can you hear me / that when it rains and shines / it's just a state of mind." The song is heavily informed by LSD and evokes a feeling of heightened consciousness through its philosophical lyrics and instrumentation. In this way, "Rain" is a significant track in the Beatles' discography as it repositions them at the heart of the counterculture by acknowledging, and somewhat promoting, the emerging psychedelic era. As Ian MacDonald claims, "'Rain' is the first pop song to draw on an 'us and them' line between the children of Leary's psychedelic revolution and the supposedly unknowing materialism of the parental culture. Here, the post-war 'generation gap' acquires a philosophical significance which would soon seize the imagination of Western youth."[57]

[55] The first *recorded* track that uses backwards tape was "Tomorrow Never Knows."
[56] MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head*, 198.
[57] *Ibid.* 197.

While "Rain" does not reference women in its lyrics, the song remains significant for the purposes of this study as it draws the Beatles back to their countercultural roots while also positioning the band as the frontrunners in the emerging psychedelic rock music of the counterculture. From this point on, the Beatles shed the majority of their pop music, boy-band image and fully immerse themselves and their sound into the counterculture. This means that, in analysing the lyrics of Beatles' songs from this point on, their songs call for careful consideration as meaningful and intentional works of art. Moreover, their lyrics need to be examined for their replication and promotion of countercultural values and perspectives, particularly in their approaches to women and femininity, as will be discussed in length in Chapter 3 of this essay.

The single "Paperback Writer / Rain" serves as an important gateway into the sound the Beatles would more fully realise in their next studio album, *Revolver*. "Paperback Writer" introduces new roles women can play, never before seen in a Beatles song, while "Rain" continues the band's new trend of songs that contain no reference to women, gender, or romance. Further, this single re-centres the Beatles in the counterculture and ties them to the emerging psychedelic scene, changing the way their lyrics should be approached, particularly in regard to gender. Finally, through all of these aspects, this single demanded a new approach to interpreting and listening to Beatles' songs, somewhat preparing listeners for what was to come on *Revolver* while heralding in a new image for the band.

1.4 *Revolver*

The psychedelic sound used in *Revolver* was not produced in a vacuum. The Beatles were exploring new recording techniques and philosophical themes along with countless other artists at the time, participating in the emerging psychedelic scene. By 1966, other musicians had already released "psychedelic" music, such as the Grateful Dead, the Great Society, the Beach Boys and the Byrds in California, and the Yardbirds and the Kinks in the UK. The Beatles were contributing as much to this new movement as they were consuming, actively partaking in the musical evolution that would produce the music that defined the 1960s counterculture, like Jefferson Airplane, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, and others. *Revolver*, then, was released in the midst of this developing musical revolution and is considered to be the Beatles' first great contribution to psychedelic sound.[58]

[58] Russell Reising and Jim LeBlanc, "Magical mystery tours, and other trips: yellow submarines, newspaper taxis, and the Beatles' psychedelic years," *The Cambridge Companion to the Beatles*, ed. Kenneth Womack (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 93.

Continuing their movement away from stereotypical love songs, the tracks included on Revolver had the largest ratio of non-romantic to romantic songs yet to be seen on a Beatles' record. This does not necessarily mean that the Beatles held women or romance in any less regard than before, but instead indicates that they were developing a more complex understanding of relationships, gender, and meanings of love. Further, to reiterate, *Revolver* was recorded and released during one of the most turbulent years in the Beatles' career, during which they also dedicated large amounts of time to deeper intellectual and artistic exploration. These factors contributed to the maturation of the Beatles' thematic range, as did, perhaps even more so, their use of drugs at the time. Marijuana and LSD heavily informed *Revolver*'s sound and image, which allowed the band to grow creatively and enabled them to explore common themes like love in more covert and philosophical ways.

The novel amount of introspection used in song writing on *Revolver* complicates analysis of how the songs were received and interpreted by fans. For example, songs on the album like "I Want to Tell You" and "Got to Get You Into My Life" could be heard by fans as romantic songs about courtship, but really they were written by Harrison and McCartney to express their intellectual explorations with Eastern culture and LSD, respectively. Therefore, the Beatles' pop fans could interpret these two songs as love songs, while their more countercultural audience could have heard the tracks for their underlying intellectual themes. Similarly, the sound of "Here, There, and Everywhere" is reminiscent of the Beatles' former style of songs, with the idealisation of romance at the forefront of the narration. However, the song was also interpreted by countercultural fans as celebratory of women in a way not seen before from the Beatles by highlighting the female character's "earth-mother" qualities.[59] The "earth-mother" trope is a depiction of countercultural women replicated in many countercultural artworks. Thus, the inclusion of this character in a Beatles song is an important signifier in the band's changing approaches to women.

This paper will return to these songs shortly, but I introduce the complexity of analysing the songs on *Revolver* now to explain that *Revolver* calls for a different method of investigating song lyrics than the band's preceding discography. From their deepening introspection and intellectual connection with the world and artists around them to their shift away from touring and heightened use of drugs, the band was approaching their song writing

[59] Jacqueline Warwick, "I'm Eleanor Rigby: female identity and *Revolver*," Every Sound There Is: *The Beatles Revolver and the Transformation of Rock and Roll*, ed by Russell Reising (New York: Routledge, 2002) 62.

process differently than before by the time they began recording *Revolver*. Thus, this paper's approach to analysing the lyrics of *Revolver*'s tracks will also change to include more context for songs' inspirations and influences. This adapted approach is similar to that of Ian MacDonald and Steve Turner's use of context to illustrate and emphasise the novel song-writing practices the Beatles were using at this time.

When comparing *Revolver* with its predecessor, *Rubber Soul*, the two albums are rather dichotic, one expressing excitement with life while the other anxiously anticipates death. The humour in "Drive My Car," the joy in "The Word," the nostalgia and gratitude in "In My Life," and the call to participate fully in life in "Nowhere Man" are nearly negated with *Revolver*'s tones of death in "Eleanor Rigby" and "Taxman," apathy in "I'm Only Sleeping," and existential crisis in "She Said She Said." Devin McKinney attributes *Revolver*'s coldness to the Beatles' exhaustion with their world of touring and obsessive fans, which led them to carefully reflect on their roles as celebrities:

> In 1966 the Beatles' varied audiences drew circles around themselves and their objects of obsession, spaces of extreme action for carrying out highly personalized fantasies. With *Revolver*, the group drew their own circles; and within each, they themselves were both the authors and enactors of a Beatle-centered dream...each was its own kind of Beatle fantasy, formed from its author's sense of what the Beatles were, how tall they stood in the world, *and how their statements and acts might make the world turn differently in its next revolution* [emphasis added].[60]

In other words, *Revolver* was the Beatles' most intentional and contemplative album yet as each band member reflected on their imprisonment in stardom and their place within the growing countercultural scene. Fully understanding the weight of their lyrics on their audience by this point, the messages the Beatles conveyed in *Revolver* were carefully crafted, which is important when evaluating the impact of this album on their fans. The Beatles, however, were also aware that their fans would assign their own meanings to whatever messages the band conveyed in their songs, and therefore they remained honest in their lyrics, decidedly not catering to anyone else's lyrical desires but their own.[61]

The candid lyrics of *Revolver*'s tracks further distinguished the band members from one another, again expanding the reception of the Beatles' work from that of a group to that of a collection of individual artists. Therefore, one method of approaching *Revolver*'s tracks

[60] McKinney, *Magic Circles*, 170-171.
[61] *Ibid.*

is to sort them by the main contributor. In their portrayal of women, Lennon's "She Said She Said" and "And Your Bird Can Sing" stand in stark contrast to McCartney's "Here, There and Everywhere" and "For No One," as well as Harrison's "Love You To." In this way, the band members' individually evolving approaches to songwriting contribute to their differing depictions of gender, as will be examined shortly.

As *Revolver* ends with its beginning, this paper will begin with its ending: the final song on the record, "Tomorrow Never Knows," was the first track recorded for the album, and its psychedelic sound influenced the band's recording methods for the rest of the album's songs.[62] "Tomorrow Never Knows" was the Beatles' most psychedelic track to date, using inventive recording methods to create its swirling sounds.[63] Its philosophic lyrics were inspired by Timothy Leary's *The Psychedelic Experience,* a book Leary adapted from the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* as a guide for embarking on LSD trips. The Beatles (particularly Lennon) and Leary had a mutual respect for one another that would continue for years. During his addiction to LSD, Lennon was dependent on *The Psychedelic Experience* for guidance through his trips, making "Tomorrow Never Knows" essentially Lennon's paraphrasing of *The Psychedelic Experience,* even including some direct quotes from the book like "turn off your mind / relax and float downstream."[64]

The lack of explicit reference to gender in the lyrics of "Tomorrow Never Knows" is why the song is important to consider when examining the Beatles' changing approaches. As touched on previously, the Beatles' move away from explicitly gendered songs increased with the release of *Revolver*, where, for the first time, the number of songs on the album that were non-romantic outnumbered those that were romantic in theme. None of Lennon's contributions to *Revolver* reference romance; "I'm Only Sleeping," "And Your Bird Can Sing," and "Doctor Robert" make no mention of women or love in their lyrics. Meanwhile, "She Said She Said" speaks of women, but not in a romantic way.

"She Said She Said" describes a conversation between the narrator and a woman who is belittling him to the point that he says, "And I know that I'm ready to leave / 'cause you're

[62] Reising and LeBlanc, "Magical mystery tours," 94-95.

[63] For a detailed account of the innovative recording techniques used on "Tomorrow Never Knows" as well as "Rain," see Ian MacDonald's sections on the tracks in *Revolution in the Head.*

[64] I argue that Leary's influence on Lennon at this time may have also influenced Lennon's perception of women. Leary was notoriously sexist and homophobic in his writings. *The Psychedelic Experience* was written for a male audience, only mentioning women as sexual objects to be employed to further a man's LSD trip or referencing females in Buddhist traditions. Given Lennon's documented dependence on Leary's book, Lennon would have encountered and considered Leary's harsh approaches to women. How Lennon interpreted Leary's sexism, however, can only be speculated.

making me feel like I've never been born." Based on the story told by the lyrics alone, the song portrays the woman as condescending towards the male narrator, making him uncomfortable and frustrated by talking about death and spirituality. However, the background story of "She Said She Said" adds an interesting layer to the gender roles performed in song. The lyrics are famously based on an interaction between Lennon and actor Peter Fonda in the summer of 1965. As the story goes, Lennon was embarking on an LSD trip with a group of friends, including some of the band members of the Byrds while Fonda was, uninvitedly, telling the group about a near death experience he had once had, making Lennon feel uncomfortable and fearful of a bad trip.[65] Subsequently, Lennon wrote "She Said She Said" to relay his anxiety about this conversation between him and Fonda.

Why, then, did Lennon deliberately change the gender of the antagonist in the song? Historian Jacqueline Warwick offers an explanation for this play with gender as a way for Lennon to stress the difference between himself and the other person:

> In the context of 'She Said She Said', the effect of mapping qualities of arrogance and affected posturing onto an abject female character is to differentiate her as much as possible from Lennon, reinforce his own boundaries, and shore up his vulnerable masculinity...This opposition would be less compelling had the character retained Peter Fonda's gender, and the song would have been a complicated presentation of different kinds of masculinity, rather than a conventional binary of male vs. female, he said/she said.[66]

Bearing Lennon's emphasis on the binary in mind, "She Said She Said" can be interpreted in different ways depending on the listener's understanding of the song's backstory. Warwick argues that some listeners could have found the female character in "She Said She Said" to be empowering because the woman in the song is strong enough to get under the narrator's skin.[67] On the other hand, I argue the opposite to also be true; Lennon's intentional switching of the genders sheds light on his lyrical approach to women as he, once again, negatively portrays women as frustrating and difficult to communicate with in his songs. This has been seen before in *Rubber Soul*'s "Girl" and "Norwegian Wood," and is replicated again in Lennon's later work like "I'm So Tired."

"She Said She Said" is Lennon's only contribution to *Revolver* that references gender. His remaining tracks on the album, "I'm Only Sleeping, "And Your Bird Can Sing,"

[65] MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head*, 211.
[66] Warwick, "I'm Eleanor Rigby," 61.
[67] *Ibid.* 60.

"Doctor Robert," and "Tomorrow Never Knows," speak of drug experiences and spiritual and existential exploration rather than romance or gender. In contrast to Lennon's tracks from *Rubber Soul*, all of which contain lyrical themes of romance that pertain to women except for "Nowhere Man" and "The Word," his contributions to *Revolver* indicate a sharp turn away from his former romantic thematic range. Lennon will not write another explicitly romantic song again until 1969's "Don't Let Me Down." Compared to his relatable love songs from the Beatles' earlier days, Lennon's shift to more complex, philosophical, and deeply personal songs would have been a shock for some fans. This essay will discuss the reception of Lennon's shift away from discussing women and love in his songs in Chapter 2.

Where Lennon moved towards more cryptic lyrics, McCartney maintained his characteristically straight-forward writing style in his contributions to *Revolver*. Out of McCartney's six songs on the album, only one, "Yellow Submarine," can be interpreted as non-romantic or non-gendered. Moreover, McCartney's lyrical portrayal of women is the most dynamic and complex of the Beatles' songs that reference gender. Just in *Revolver* alone, McCartney uses a large range of images of women in his songs, from the lonely spinster of "Eleanor Rigby" to the earth-mother in "Here, There, and Everywhere;" from the strongly independent woman in "For No One," to the joyful girl of "Good Day Sunshine." These varying images of women in McCartney's songs indicate that he has a complicated understanding of gender dynamics as well as the varying degrees of femininity. When compared to Lennon's songs, which often contain their female characters in tight boxes, McCartney's lyrical approach to gender offers a refreshing sense of freedom for women by allowing them to play diverse roles in his lyrics.

Take, for example, the track "For No One." Notable for its use of pronouns as the narrator directs the song to "you" in a way that implies that the narrator is omnipresent to the characters in the story, "For No One" tells the tale of a woman leaving her partner. The female character is shown as feeling no remorse for ending the relationship, as the narrator sings, "She no longer needs you / and in her eyes you see nothing / no sign of love behind the tears / cried for no one." While this woman could be seen as cold-hearted, her fierce independence remains empowering: "You stay home, she goes out / she says that long ago she knew someone but now he's gone / she doesn't need him." In contrast to other Beatle songs where the female character is deeply dependent on the male, as seen in "Think for Yourself" and "You Like Me Too Much," the woman in "For No One" can, and does, exist independently of her former partner. In some ways, such freedom from the ties of a

relationship in “For No One” reiterates the noncommittal characteristics seen in the male characters of songs like “Another Girl,” “If I Needed Someone” and “I’ll Follow the Sun,” but, this time, the song allows for the woman to be noncommittal.

In contrast to the female character in “For No One,” the woman presented in “Here, There and Everywhere” welcomes her partner’s dependence on her and seems to reciprocate the attention. On the surface, “Here, There and Everywhere” sounds like an older Beatles song as it idealises love with the lines, “Each one believing that love never dies,” “I want her everywhere / and if she’s beside me I know I need never care,” and, “There, running my hands through her hair / both of us thinking how good it can be.” While the song may initially sound retrospective for the Beatles, Sheila Whitley notes the importance placing the song within its historical moment, claiming, “That the idealization of the woman as a fantasy figure and, more specifically, an earth mother was paradoxically central to countercultural philosophy.”[68] As noted previously, the Beatles were becoming more and more in tune with the emerging counterculture of their time and therefore their adoption of “countercultural philosophy” in their lyrics is rationalised. Whitley continues to argue that the female character in “Here, There and Everywhere” “is inscribed as the provider, the forgiver, the healer.”[69] This “earth-mother” trope is replicated in countless countercultural works, including film, art, literature and music, as well as another McCartney song on *Revolver*, “Good Day Sunshine,” with its brief reference to a female character, and in the Beatles’ later discography with other McCartney songs like “Mother Nature’s Son” and “Lady Madonna.”

McCartney’s use of this often-seen countercultural image of women is significant as he presents it in a song that sounds retrospective and conservative. Moreover, McCartney’s use of this trope adds the Beatles to the ongoing conversation about the impact of the counterculture’s portrayal of women and how they were confined to certain roles. This will be touched on in Chapter 3 but remains important to mention now to emphasise the contrast between the female characters in “Here, There and Everywhere” and McCartney’s other songs on *Revolver*, particularly “Eleanor Rigby.” As Whitley poignantly states, “The question arises as to why romanticized femininity is problematic and how it relates to the fate associated with Eleanor Rigby’s spinsterhood” when both songs depict traditional images of femininity.[70]

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[68] Sheila Whitley, “‘Love is all and love is everyone’: a discussion of four musical portraits,” Every Sound There Is: *The Beatles Revolver and the Transformation of Rock and Roll*, ed by Russell Reising (New York: Routledge, 2002) 214.

[69] *Ibid.*

[70] *Ibid.* 214-215.

In addition to the independent woman in "For No One" and the earth-mother of "Here, There, and Everywhere," McCartney offers another depiction of women with the female character in "Eleanor Rigby." As one of McCartney's "character study" songs, "Eleanor Rigby" is about the story of an older woman who is isolated from others, exploring her feelings of loneliness in her daily life and in her death. Concern with alienation was another common theme seen in the works of the counterculture but was often explored through a male perspective. Thus, "Eleanor Rigby" offers a fresh point of view on a frequently used discussion within the counterculture by exploring alienation through a female character. However, the character Eleanor Rigby is not an idealised form of femininity in the slightest; she is a spinster completely alone even in her death.

Where McCartney's other songs allowed room for interpretation of the female character, "Eleanor Rigby" leaves little space for negotiation over her spinsterhood.[71] In "Eleanor Rigby," the character's alienation is a result in the failure of the church community and the strict English middle-class etiquette that forbade Eleanor from reaching out to others for companionship.[72] In terms of pop music, "Eleanor Rigby" was a revolutionary track with its overarching theme of death, a theme usually avoided in pop music,[73] and its sole use of string instrumentation arranged by George Martin, the first song the Beatles produced without any of their own instrumental contributions.[74] As part of the Beatles' larger discography, "Eleanor Rigby" is one of their most overtly political and socially-conscious songs, alongside Harrison's "Taxman" and Lennon's "Nowhere Man" and later "Revolution."

As such an important song for both the Beatles and for pop music in 1966, the fact that the main character is female is quite significant as her gender is used to convey that women, too, could feel the same anxieties about alienation as countercultural men. While Whitley and Warwick both argue that "Eleanor Rigby" is an incredibly bleak portrayal of women, I contend that her character could be interpreted as an important, and rarely seen, placing of women in the centre of the counterculture. Most countercultural works, particularly those that explore themes of death and alienation, focus on male experience and push women to the periphery of the story, suggesting they do not go through the same

[71] Warwick, "I'm Eleanor Rigby," 64.
[72] MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head*, 204.
[73] *Ibid*. 203
[74] Whitley, "Love is all and love is everyone," 209.

struggles as men. Through the character of Eleanor Rigby, whether deliberately or not, McCartney's use of a female to carry a social argument places women at the forefront of countercultural philosophy as he utilises a woman to convey a theme of loneliness that was often seen in countercultural works, but only through the lens of male characters. To that end, McCartney does not idealise or romanticise Eleanor Rigby, which both serves as a novel approach to women in pop music lyrics and as a new understanding of the complexity of femininity. In this way, McCartney's "Eleanor Rigby" is unexpectedly empowering for women through its bleak portrayal of spinsterhood and dreary discussion of alienation.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for Harrison's song, "Love You To." Also exploring themes of mortality, "Love You To" returns to male perspectives to discuss countercultural philosophies, as with the lyric, "Love me while you can / before I'm a dead old man." Here, Harrison's song pushes women back to the periphery of the story as the female character in the song only serves the narrator as a sexual object: "But what you've got means such a lot to me / make love all day long / make love singing songs." Her apprehensions with death are of no concern to the narrator, only his anxieties matter and her only purpose in the story is to ease his frustrations through sex. In this way, "Love You To" fits in with other countercultural works with its discussion of countercultural themes through the male perspective with little attention paid to the experience of women in the same situation.

Of course, as with the other songs on *Revolver*, "Love You To" can be interpreted differently when contextualising the lyrics in the Beatles' experiences of 1966. Devin McKinney offers his understanding of the song as Harrison's enervation with Beatlemania:

> ...For a song that invokes love, that openly speaks to a lover, it is the sourest of valentines. Harrison sounds irretrievably tired, infinitely drained as he gives in to the lover, the fan, the fifteen-year-old girl one more time—and so the Beatle dream in inverted. Once love was all, was not willed but natural, not extorted but given...Now, in "Love You To," it is the reverse: now it is the apprehension of death that drives the music, while love—its memory as against its present reality—is what drags it down.[75]

In other words, "Love You To" can also be seen as an expression of the Beatles' exhaustion in 1966. Harrison's tired, reluctant words of love could be interpreted by fans as another, albeit weaker, Beatle song about romance that overshadows the female character with the

[75] McKinney, *Magic Circles*, 116.

male's anxieties about death. To a fan understanding of the band's exhaustive and turbulent year in 1966, the song could be understood for implicitly being directed at the Beatles' fans, as McKinney articulates. Either way, "Love You To" leaves its listener feeling as frustrated and tired as the narrator is towards his lover, casting another negative light on women in the songs of *Revolver*.

There are two remaining songs to be discussed on *Revolver*: McCartney's "Got to Get You Into My Life," and Harrison's "I Want To Tell You." Both of these tracks can be heard as romantic songs as their lyrics suggest that the narrators are attempting to court a female. However, neither song actually explicitly references women or romance. In fact, "Got to Get You Into My Life" is McCartney's excited proclamation about being introduced to LSD.[76] Meanwhile, Harrison was regarded as the weakest lyrical writer in the Beatles at this time.[77] Thus, rather than a love song, "I Want To Tell You" makes more sense as a song relaying Harrison's difficulty with lyric writing in combination with his exploration of Eastern spirituality: he wants to convey his intellectual growth but does not know how. To fans oblivious to Beatles' private lives, these two songs could easily be interpreted as a return to the band's former song writing style and thematic range. In comparison to other songs on the album, in particular "She Said She Said" and "Love You To," they sound positive and optimistic towards women and romance. For the average listener, "Got to Get You Into My Life" and "I Want to Tell You" balance out the heavier songs on *Revolver*, reminding fans of the old Beatles' sound and more idealised lyrical approach to women and romance in which listeners could envision themselves as the addressee of the songs. On the other hand, listeners who could tie these two songs to the Beatles' deepening countercultural roots would have understood them differently, hearing instead praises for intellectual expansion and drug exploration. In this way, "I Want to Tell You" and "Got to Get You Into My Life" are representative of *Revolver* as a whole: knowing their listeners would glean whatever messages held the most meaning to them, the Beatles expressed their individual desires and anxieties in the lyrics of their songs, allowing their audience to make up their own minds about the lyrics' themes.

More overtly countercultural than ever before, the Beatles' work in *Revolver* solidified the band's shift from a youthful boyband to mature, experimental artists. As their only full studio album released in 1966, their lyrical messages on *Revolver* were deliberate,

[76] Steve Turner, *Beatles '66*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2016), 146.
[77] McKinney, *Magic Circles*, 116.

conscious of the world around the band and the band's place in the world. Moreover, *Revolver* stood as the Beatles' first great participation in the emerging psychedelic and counterculture music scene. The influences on and impact of *Revolver* help explain the band's diverging lyrical themes and musical experimentation, as well as the band members' individual approaches to lyric writing and changing representation of gender in their songs.

1.5 Lyrical Shifts, 1965-1966

This chapter has examined three studio albums and four singles released between 1965 and 1966, utilising forty-five songs to map the Beatles' lyrical evolution at the mid-point of their career. In the process, it has explored the varying degrees of lyrical reference to gender and romance, paying attention to narration, album placement, and, where applicable, instrumentation and background context to the songs. As a result, the following themes and tropes have been analysed for their change over time in the lyrics of Beatles songs:

Themes about Romance:

- **Idealisation of Romance**—the majority of pre-1965 Beatles songs pertain to the idealisation of romance. While this theme generally becomes less present after 1965, it still permeated in the Beatles' lyrics in more complex ways like in "In My Life," and "Here, There, and Everywhere." The continuation of this theme with more complicated lyrics indicates a maturation of the Beatles' understanding of relationships.

- **Disillusionment with Romance**—also a heavily used theme in their early discography, the Beatles continue to explore feelings of disillusionment with relationships in 1965 on. However, the lyrics of the Beatles' later songs pertaining to this theme indicate a more nuanced understanding of romance as they become more poetic and philosophical, as seen in "Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)" and "Love You To."

- **Jealousy in Relationships**—seen in earlier songs like "You Can't Do That," "No Reply" and "Baby's In Black," the Beatles tended to express jealousy over women interacting with other men in their older song-writing style. By 1966, this theme largely disappears after coming to a violent climax with "Run For Your Life" on *Rubber Soul*. The dissipation of this theme conveys a maturity in the Beatles lyrics as they remove this simple expression of

jealousy from their repertoire, replacing such sentiment with recognition of their lovers' past and potential future partners, a willingness to work through and better understand conflicts in relationships, and an appreciation for their partners' needs and desires (see below).

- **Accepting Past/Future Partners**—where earlier Beatles song had a double standard that did not allow for the narrator's partner to have past or future lovers while he could (like in "If I Fell," "Yes It Is," and "Another Girl"), this theme briefly emerges in 1965 with "Wait" and "If I Needed Someone," but is not prevalent again in the band's later work. This theme's short appearance in Beatles songs represents an understanding of women as equals in relationships, but its disappearance in their later discography calls into question if this sentiment of equality truly prevailed.

- **Willingness to Understand or Work Through Conflict in Relationships**—particularly seen in McCartney's songs like "We Can Work It Out" and "Wait," the repetition of this theme in Beatles songs indicates a more mature approach to relationships when compared to previous songs like "You Can't Do That" and "Not a Second Time," where the narrator dramatically resigns from a relationship at the first sign of conflict. Meanwhile, other songs, like "Girl," attempt to understand a partner's past to explore why a partner is abusive, in contrast to other songs discussing abusive partners like "Honey Don't" and "What You're Doing" that remain superficial.

- **Recognition of Partners' Desires/Needs**—this theme debuts in 1965 with "Ticket to Ride" and continues to develop in songs like "You're Going to Lose That Girl" and "For No One." By recognising their partner's wants and needs in their lyrics, these Beatles songs signify a view of women as autonomous, equal beings that deserve the same attention and consideration as the male partner in relationships.

Themes on Gender and Use of Feminine Tropes:

- **Women as Non-Sexual, Non-Romantic Beings**—between 1965 and 1966, the Beatles introduce and repeatedly use images of women that are not strictly

romantic or sexual objects whose relationship status is inconsequential. Beginning with "Drive My Car" and continuing with "Paperback Writer," "She Said She Said," "Eleanor Rigby," and later songs like "She's Leaving Home," "Lady Madonna," and many more, these lyrical depictions of women as non-romantic beings stands in stark contrast to the band's earlier discography and indicates a more nuanced understanding of the multiplicity of womanhood.

- **Women as Earth-Mothers**—employing countercultural themes and tropes in multiple ways, the Beatles' depiction of women in songs like "Here, There, and Everywhere," "Lady Madonna," and "Mother Nature's Son," places them within existing debates over the counterculture's portrayal of its women. This complicates analysis of the Beatles' lyrics' impact and reception as they move away from their boyband image to more experimental, overtly countercultural figures.

- **Women as Intellectually Inferior**—despite the introduction of other themes and portrayals of women that are progressive, the Beatles did release songs that lyrically spoke of women as intellectually inferior to men. Including "I'm Looking Through You" and "Think For Yourself," and "She Said She Said" songs like these indicate a prejudice within the Beatles that women could not undergo the same intellectual growth as the male narrators in their songs. This repeated trope stands in unfortunate contrast to the progressions the band was making in their lyrical portrayal of women during this time.

Finally, in addition to the evolution of romantic themes and depiction of gender in the Beatles songs between 1965 and 1966, the largest growing category of songs were non-romantic or gender related tracks. By 1966, the Beatles' songs were mostly about non-romantic, non-gendered topics, exploring instead themes like countercultural philosophy as in "The Word," "Tomorrow Never Knows," and "Rain," participation in society like in "Nowhere Man," "Taxman," and "Eleanor Rigby," and personal struggles as seen in "Help!" Some of these songs, like "Got to Get You Into My Life" and "I Want To Tell You," could still be interpreted by fans as romantic, but in reality were inspired by other experiences. Moreover, the artistic developments of each individual Beatle member become more defined

in 1965-1966 as common themes among the artists arise. For example, Lennon begins to write lyrics mostly pertaining to countercultural themes, McCartney begins his character study series and writes songs with the largest thematic range in regard to depiction of women, and Harrison focuses on Eastern spirituality and philosophy. Potentially the largest and most obvious evolution of the Beatles' lyrics from 1965-1966, the emergence of these non-romantic and non-gendered themes takes over the Beatles' former thematic range, changing the band's presentation to and reception by their audience.

The ebb and flow of thematic range and depiction of gender in the Beatles' lyrics during this time is complex and multi-faceted. To understand these changes to song-writing practices within the band and with each individual band member is to understand their place in society in 1965 and 1966, to appreciate the clash between their personal lives and their unprecedented fame, to recognise the development of the counterculture, the psychedelic era and perception of music as art and how the Beatles participated in and contributed to all of this. The musical and lyrical strides the Beatles took between 1965 and 1966 were radical for the time, revolutionising the industry standard of music production and transforming what themes and messages were accepted from musicians' lyrics.[78] The next chapter will examine the reception of the Beatles' evolution over these two years by fans between the US and the UK in attempts to appreciate how these revolutions were received and understood by the Beatles' audience. Paying special attention to their female fanbase, the next chapter will also work towards appreciating the impact of the Beatles' changing approaches to women and romance in their lyrics.

[78] Turner, "Epilogue," *Beatles '66*, *passim.*

CHAPTER TWO: THE FANS

"The Beatlemania phenomenon wasn't really about a talented long-haired rock band from Merseyside. It was about girls. And it was about girls losing it." —Virginia Nicholson

While it seems nearly impossible to understand the Beatles' stardom without considering their fanbase, there is a lack of scholarship on the "Beatlemaniacs" or "Beatle People," as they called themselves. In most work on the Beatles, scholars fail to adequately document the significance of those in the throes of Beatlemania. This is unfortunate because, arguably, the Beatles' fame largely depended on their boisterous, committed, and emotionally and economically invested fanbase. Consequently, Beatle scholars are missing a large and important aspect of the Beatles' significance in history: their impact on people and culture rather than just their impact on the music industry. This chapter examines primary sources to analyse how the Beatles approached women in their lyrics in 1965 and 1966. In this way, this section focuses on the participants in Beatlemania, inviting scholars to recognise that Beatles fans are just as important and influential as the band itself and as interesting as the historical-sociological phenomenon of Beatlemania.

2.1 An Introduction to Beatlemania

As with any large fanbase, there are multiple degrees and aspects of Beatlemania to consider when attempting to understand the band's influence on society. The most common image associated with Beatlemania is that of the screaming girls at concerts who seemed to lose all inhibitions as they watched their idols perform. As Steve Turner describes, "The call to freedom that came from the Beatles led these girls into a state of abandon. For the duration of the concert they could completely ignore society's rules for appropriate conduct...they were transported into a state of consciousness where 'normality' seemed irrelevant."[79]

During the sixties, there were several attempts to understand this phenomenon of hysteria displayed by Beatle fans.[80] Some compared this "abandonment" to a religious experience similar to participants in Pentecostal or shamanistic rituals.[81] Psychologists,

[79] Turner, *The Gospel According to the Beatles*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 88.

[80] I use the term "hysteria" here in replication of the language used by those attempting to understand Beatlemania in the 1960s. Such language in itself has gendered connotations, as is documented in articles on feminist history, particularly in the medical field. See Micale, M. S. (1989). Hysteria and its Historiography: A Review of Past and Present Writings (II). *History of Science*, *27*(4), 319–351 & Briggs, Laura. "The Race of Hysteria: 'Overcivilization' and the 'Savage' Woman in Late Nineteenth-Century Obstetrics and Gynecology." *American Quarterly*, vol. 52, no. 2, 2000, pp. 246–273.

[81] *Ibid.*

reporters and religious leaders attempted to understand the hysteria that ensued at the Beatles' shows, some going so far as to say the Beatles were a communist ploy to corrupt the younger generation,[82] that female Beatle fans were more likely to be more assertive, active, and anxious when compared to their non-Beatle fan counterparts,[83] or that the Beatles adopted medieval musical techniques and Celtic poetic forms to present an alternative to paternalistic Christianity to their fans, causing a mass hypnotic phenomenon.[84] While some of these theories were rather far-fetched, their basis remains significant: the hysteria created by Beatlemania had a profound effect on young girls, so much so that adults from varying backgrounds were doing everything they could to try to explain what they deemed to be a phenomenon.

Beatlemania reached further than the crowds at Beatle shows, however. The hysteria in the presence of the band also translated into a large commercial enterprise. Beatle collectibles were in high demand, ranging from wigs and masks to trading cards and pictures, not to mention the band's LP's and singles. Beatle fans financially committed to their idols in an unprecedented way, spending their money on not just merchandise, but also on postage for mailing fan letters, tickets and travel costs to shows, and fan club memberships and magazine subscriptions. To this day, Beatle fans continue to express their emotional investment to the band through monetary investment.[85] The economic side of Beatlemania further indicates how deeply invested its participants were by showing that their commitment to the band was not just emotional or psychological, but materialistic and physical as well.

Beatlemania also offered a communal space for its participants. Fan clubs and committees sprouted up around the world. Magazines would connect readers to other fans as pen pals. One magazine in particular, *Beatles Book Monthly*, published fan letters in a section in every issue. This section, called "Letters From Beatle People," became a sort of public forum for discussion with other fans, much like what is seen on social media today. Reading these magazines and fan letters, it becomes apparent how closely "Beatle People" followed their idols as they noticed and kept track of changes from the band members, like gaining or losing weight, having a toothache, getting a new car or wearing clothing made from a new type of cloth. With such careful consideration for the smallest of details of the

[82] Reference Rev. David Noebel, "Communism, Hypnotism and the Beatles: An Analysis of the Communist use of Music," published by *Christian Crusade Publications* in 1965.
[83] Reference A. J. W. Taylor, "Beatlemania—A Study in Adolescent Enthusiasm," published in the *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* in 1966.
[84] Evan Davies, "Psychological Characteristics of Beatle Mania." *Journal of the History of Ideas* (1969): 273-280.
[85] As a fan who spent over £600 on a collection of Beatle magazines, I can personally attest to this.

Beatles' lives, there is no doubt these Beatle People also closely examined the changes in the Beatles' music between 1965 and 1966. Allow me to support this with evidence from various primary sources from the Beatle People themselves.

2.2 *Beatles Book Monthly*

With a total of 77 issues published between 1963 and 1969, *Beatles Book Monthly* is one of the most significant primary sources on Beatlemania because of its dependence on fan participation in its content in addition to its endorsement by the Beatles and the official Beatles Fan Club. The magazine was based in the UK but quickly grew so popular that it had thousands of subscribers from all over the world. The magazine had repeating sections in its issues, ranging from informal conversations between Beatles, articles on the Beatles' history and behind-the-scenes stories, exclusive photos of the band, a list of Beatle pen pals for fans to write, a song of the month, and a selection of fan letters written to the band and to the magazine. Moreover, the magazine worked to actively engage its subscribers by holding multiple polls and competitions each year. In this way, the editor of the *Beatles Book Monthly*, Johnny Dean, used the voices of fans to drive the content of the magazine, rendering it a magazine by and for the Beatle People.[86]

This democratic structure distinguishes *Beatles Book Monthly* from other similar pop and rock music magazines, like *Rave*, *Record Mirror*, or *Pop Weekly*, whose contents were dictated instead by music journalists. The significance of *Beatles Book Monthly*'s fan-led organisation is twofold: first, as mentioned previously, analyses of the Beatles' success and cultural impact neglects their fanbase, focusing instead on the band themselves. Therefore, this magazine's dependence upon fan participation makes it an important and unique source for understanding the influence of the Beatles' music and the performance of gender in relation to their mostly young female fanbase. Secondly, *Beatles Book Monthly*'s articles were not written by music critics or journalists, but rather by members of the Beatles' administrative team, including the occasional female writer such as the Beatles' secretary, Freda Kelly. The lack of conventional journalistic language when comparing this magazine to similar publications is significant because music journalism has a long-standing history of sexism.[87]

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[86] Despite its rather democratic organisation, it is still important to note that the content published in *Beatles Book Monthly* did require approval from Johnny Dean, and therefore the magazine was unavoidably always somewhat biased. Further, because some parts of the magazine were endorsed by the Beatles as well, the kind of material published had to correlate with their desired public image. These factors are important when considering what fan letters were published in each issue.

[87] Helen Davies, "All Rock and Roll is Homosocial: The Representation of Women in the British Rock Music Press," *Popular Music*, vol 20 no 3 Gender and Sexuality, Oct 2001, *passim*.

As Helen Davies articulates, the majority of British music press was dominated by men, so much so that "the music press assumes that all its readers are male as well, so that the situation is often one of male journalists writing for male readers, a fact reflected in the mode of address of much music writing."[88] In this way, music journalists would often infantilise young female fans, also known as "teenyboppers," making the assumption that such fans were sexually naive and passive as they followed mainstream trends and conveyed enthusiasm through physical expression (such as screaming at concerts).[89] This popular and patronising language is absent in *Beatles Book Monthly*, which instead takes what Davies sees as a more feminist approach, recognising "elements of activity and of feminine defiance in teenybop culture" and interpreting "such cultures as examples of female bonding and comradeship."[90]

In other words, *Beatles Book Monthly*'s reliance on the Beatles' largely female fanbase for participation in the magazine's content sets it apart from other music press as it minimises its sexist slant by celebrating the community fostered among teenyboppers rather than infantilising such fans. This makes *Beatles Book Monthly* almost radical in comparison to similar magazines, whether or not its feminism was intentional, as its recognition of the legitimacy of female fans was ahead of its time. For example, other music press often relied on the association of men with the cerebral and women with the physical, "so that women who like intelligent music are frequently assumed to not really understand it, with their fandom explained by sexual attraction to a male musician," rather than to the musician's art.[91] *Beatles Book Monthly* counters this trend by regularly publishing articles on the Beatles' musical innovations and, in later issues, publishing letters written by female fans who engaged directly with the Beatles' musical techniques. As Barbara Bradby observes, "feminist theory has wrestled with the widespread cultural equations of masculinity with activity and femininity with passivity," an equation that is disregarded in *Beatles Book Monthly*'s reliance on fan participation through letters, polls and competitions.[92]

These feminist-leaning aspects of *Beatles Book Monthly* all serve as evidence for its significance in Beatlemania both in the 1960s and today. Particularly for this study, *Beatles Book Monthly*'s dependence on and celebration of the teenybopper provides a glimpse into

[88] *Ibid.* 301-302.
[89] *Ibid*. 312.
[90] *Ibid.*
[91] *Ibid.* 313.
[92] Barbara Bradby, "She Told Me What to Say: The Beatles and Girl-Group Discourse," *Popular Music and Society*, vol 28 no 3, July 2005, 361.

the psychological and emotional lives of young female Beatle fans, serving as an unparalleled record for their evolution with the Beatles throughout the band's career. To this end, this magazine can be used to foster a deeper understanding of the impact of the Beatles' lyrical shifts in 1965 and 1966 on their fans, as the following sections intend to do.

2.2.1 Favourite Song Polls

One way in which *Beatles Book Monthly* engaged its readers was through interactive competitions and polls. The competitions ranged from submitting fun ideas for album or movie titles to drawings of the band. The magazine gave readers multiple incentives for participation, usually including special mentions in the issues announcing the winners and a cash prize. Meanwhile, the magazine's polls allowed readers to express their opinions on new albums and songs and see how they compared to others' views when the results of the polls were printed. The magazine conducted three polls between 1965 and 1966, the first two after the release of *Help!* and the third after the release of *Revolver*.[93]

For both general Beatle archives and this study, these polls serve as importantly unique signifiers of fan sentiment towards songs, showing how earlier Beatle music fared in the eyes of fans against their newer lyrical and instrumental techniques. There is plenty of data showing the popularity of the Beatles' singles in pop music charts, but these records are unreliable when exploring the longevity of early Beatle music in comparison to their later work because they only show how popular singles were at the time of their release, not how fans continued to feel about them over the years.[94] On the other hand, the first two of *Beatles Book Monthly*'s polls offer this insight with "The Best Song Ever" column. While the Beatles were still in the early stages of their lyrical evolution at the time these polls were conducted, the results show mixed reviews of their newer releases compared to their older songs.

[93] The magazine did not conduct a poll after the release of *Rubber Soul*.

[94] For example, according to Whitburn's *Top Pop Singles: 1955-2015*, "Love Me Do," "From Me To You" and "Please Please Me" were all number one hits in the US and/or the UK, but none of these songs were listed in the fan polls shown in Figure 1 or 2. Looking at Whitburn's text alone would indicate that these songs were fan favourites, but the polls in *Beatles Book Monthly* adds evidence that fans' favourite songs evolved over time. This portrays fans as more dynamic and active than charts like Whitburn's, which, when interpreted alone, can paint Beatlemania in a stagnant, fictitiously straight-forward light.

THE BEATLES BOOK FIRST

SONG POP. POLL

Here is the result of the poll. One thing that does seem very odd is that, although 'Help' tops the poll for the Best Beatles Song Ever, it only comes ninth in the L.P. Poll. The top Album Song 'Yesterday' is also 'This Month's Beatle Song'.

THE BEST 'HELP' L.P. SONG

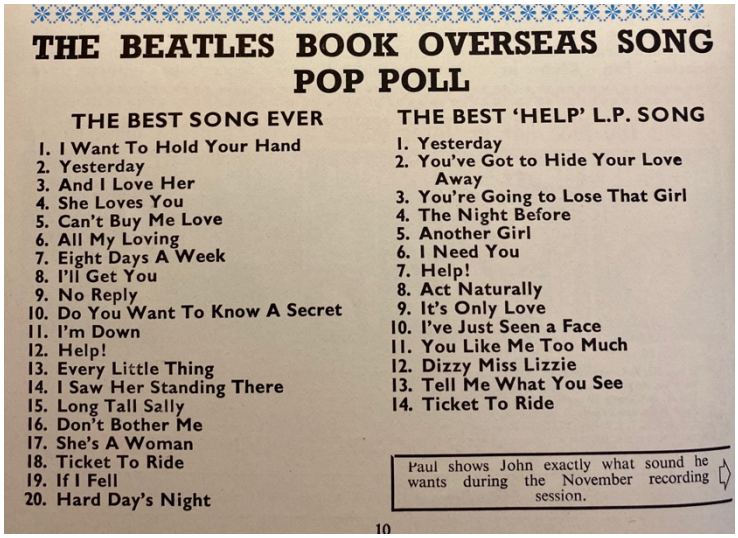
1. YESTERDAY
2. YOU'VE GOT TO HIDE YOUR LOVE AWAY
3. YOU'RE GOING TO LOSE THAT GIRL
4. ANOTHER GIRL
5. I NEED YOU
6. THE NIGHT BEFORE
7. I'VE JUST SEEN A FACE
8. YOU LIKE ME TOO MUCH
9. HELP
10. IT'S ONLY LOVE
11. ACT NATURALLY
12. TELL ME WHAT YOU SEE
13. DIZZY MISS LIZZIE
14. TICKET TO RIDE

THE BEST SONG EVER

1. HELP
2. ALL MY LOVING
3. SHE LOVES YOU
4. I'M DOWN
5. THIS BOY
6. HARD DAY'S NIGHT
7. YESTERDAY
8. TWIST AND SHOUT
9. IF I FELL
10. TICKET TO RIDE
11. YES IT IS
12. EIGHT DAYS A WEEK
13. YOU'VE GOT TO HIDE YOUR LOVE AWAY
14. I WANT TO HOLD YOUR HAND
15. AND I LOVE HER
16. CAN'T BUY ME LOVE
17. I FEEL FINE
18. SHE'S A WOMAN
19. P.S. I LOVE YOU
20. I'M A LOSER

The great Lennon and McCartney song-writing team about to tape another hit.

11



THE BEATLES BOOK OVERSEAS SONG POP POLL

THE BEST SONG EVER

1. I Want To Hold Your Hand
2. Yesterday
3. And I Love Her
4. She Loves You
5. Can't Buy Me Love
6. All My Loving
7. Eight Days A Week
8. I'll Get You
9. No Reply
10. Do You Want To Know A Secret
11. I'm Down
12. Help!
13. Every Little Thing
14. I Saw Her Standing There
15. Long Tall Sally
16. Don't Bother Me
17. She's A Woman
18. Ticket To Ride
19. If I Fell
20. Hard Day's Night

THE BEST 'HELP' L.P. SONG

1. Yesterday
2. You've Got to Hide Your Love Away
3. You're Going to Lose That Girl
4. The Night Before
5. Another Girl
6. I Need You
7. Help!
8. Act Naturally
9. It's Only Love
10. I've Just Seen a Face
11. You Like Me Too Much
12. Dizzy Miss Lizzie
13. Tell Me What You See
14. Ticket To Ride

Paul shows John exactly what sound he wants during the November recording session.

10

Figure 1: Beatles Book Monthly no. 28, Nov 1965.

Figure 2: Beatles Book Monthly no. 30, Jan 1966

In Figure 1, over half the songs listed in "The Best Song Ever" column were released in 1964, even though the poll was conducted in late 1965. It would appear at first glance, therefore, that this poll indicates a fan predilection for the Beatles' older songs. However, the poll does include every Beatle single released at that point in 1965 save for one, "Act Naturally/Boys." Moreover, the top song in Figure 1's "The Best Song Ever" column is "Help!," which, as previously mentioned, was the first original Beatles song not to explicitly refer to gender or romance. This is significant as it implies that Beatle fans in the UK were accepting of non-romantic themes in songs. This sentiment differs, however, in Figure 2's column, which lists "Help!" over halfway down the poll at number twelve, suggesting that overseas fans (mostly from the US and Australia) were perhaps less accepting of non-romantic, non-gendered songs. This is further supported by the top results of their poll, including more traditional Beatle songs "I Want to Hold Your Hand," "Yesterday," and "And I Love Her."

Meanwhile, the "Best 'Help' L.P. Song" column in Figure 1 and 2 show preference for the album's songs that speak about women and romance in more mature ways than the Beatles' previous records with "Yesterday," "You've Got to Hide Your Love Away" and "You're Going to Lose that Girl" as the top three songs on both polls. However, this preference does not extend to "Ticket to Ride," arguably the most mature and evolved song on the album, both lyrically and instrumentally, as it is listed last on each poll. Thus, these rankings indicate that fans were enjoying the Beatles' songs whose lyrics were more mature, but only to a certain extent, likely caused by factors outside the focus of this essay.

This "acceptance to a certain extent" is replicated in Figure 3, the poll conducted after the release of *Revolver*. This time including the number of votes for each song, this poll shows an overwhelming majority preference for "Here, There, and Everywhere," the song on *Revolver* to sound the most like older Beatle tunes:

RESULT OF "REVOLVER" POLL

1. Here there and Everywhere 3134
2. Eleanor Rigby 2979
3. For No One 1981
4. I'm Only Sleeping..... 1963
5. Got To Get You Into my Life. 1342
6. Good-Day Sunshine 974
7. And Your Bird Can Sing 594
8. Yellow Submarine 533
9. Tomorrow Never Knows 486
10. Love You To..... 479
11. Taxman 222
12. I Want To Tell You..... 174
13. Dr. Robert 171
14. She Said, She Said..... 166

Figure 3: Beatles Book Monthly no. 40, Nov 1966

With Figure 3 ranking "Here, There, and Everywhere," "Eleanor Rigby" and "For No One" as the top three songs, it would appear that McCartney's songs on the album were more popular amongst fans. As mentioned in the previous chapter, by 1966 McCartney's lyrics spoke the most positively about women out of the other band members by placing them in varying roles outside of romance. This poll indicates that songs that spoke more negatively about women did not sit well with fans, like the song to rank last on the poll, "She Said She Said," whose lyrics centred on the annoyingly nagging female character.

This differs from the previous polls. To generalise, "Ticket to Ride" was one of the most feminist Beatle songs released on *Help!*, with "Another Girl" being the least feminist. Similarly, on *Revolver*, "She Said She Said" is the most misogynistic song of the album. In the poll conducted at the end of 1965, "Ticket to Ride" ranked poorly despite its mature lyrics that acknowledged a woman's needs in a relationship. However, by the end of 1966, fans ranked "She Said She Said" last, indicating a shift in song reception among fans by showing their dislike for the song that spoke most negatively about women on the album. The nature of the poll, however, only allows for speculation on why songs were ranked as they were. It could be that fans still enjoyed "Ticket to Ride" and "She Said She Said," but just not as much as the albums' other songs. Similarly, these songs could have been ranked last on the polls because of their sound rather than their lyrics. Though there is no way to

know for sure what caused these songs to be ranked last, I suggest that the lyrics played a role in their popularity among fans because of the careful examination of lyrics expressed in the fan letters printed in *Beatles Book Monthly*'s "Letters from Beatle People" section, which will be explored in depth later.

2.2.2 "This Month's Beatle Song"

An important piece missing from *Beatles Book Monthly*'s polls is the fans' reception of *Rubber Soul*. This gap can be somewhat bridged by the magazine's recurring section, "The Month's Beatle Song." In each issue, *Beatles Book Monthly* reprinted a song in its entirety, providing fans with the exact lyrics to the most popular Beatle songs. In its first year of publication, the magazine would include a few sentences about why the song of the month was chosen, but by 1965 the magazine had stopped including explanations. The descriptions in earlier issues show, however, that songs were chosen based on their significance in the Beatles' career and on fan reception. It can be assumed for the sake of this study that the magazine continued to print songs they deemed to be significant to fans, particularly for their lyrics as the magazine took care to print the lyrics for each song in their entirety with the rights from the Beatles' record label. The figure below shows a typical printing of "This Month's Beatle Song:"

Figure 4: Beatles Book Monthly no 31, Feb 1966

Between the release of *Rubber Soul* and *Revolver*, *Beatles Book Monthly* selected the

following songs for each issue's "This Month's Beatle Song" section:

- No. 30 (Jan '66): "I'm Down"
- No. 31 (Feb '66): "Drive My Car"
- No. 32 (Mar '66): "I'm Looking Through You"
- No. 33 (Apr '66): "Nowhere Man"
- No. 34 (May '66): "Norwegian Wood"
- No. 35 (June '66): "Run For Your Life"
- No. 36 (July '66): "Paperback Writer"
- No. 37 (Aug '66): "Rain"
- No. 38 (Sep '66): "If I Needed Someone"

In these nine issues, about half of the songs from *Rubber Soul* were selected for publication. In terms of lyrical themes, the songs printed vary rather widely, including songs like the innovatively feminist "Drive My Car" and the violently misogynistic "Run For Your Life," with the more 'lightly' sexist songs like "I'm Looking Through You," "Norwegian Wood" and "If I Needed Someone" serving as middle ground (and with "Nowhere Man's" randomly countercultural theme thrown in the mix as well). Based on this assortment of approaches to gender in the lyrics of the songs selected, it is difficult to discern if the Beatles' evolving thematic ranges were of perceived importance to the magazine's editors. While it is just as important to take into consideration the songs on *Rubber Soul* that were not selected, when comparing these with the songs that were printed, the magazine exhibits the same mixed messages. *Rubber Soul's* tracks that did not make the cut in *Beatles Book Monthly* include "Think For Yourself" and "You Won't See Me," both of which speak condescendingly towards a woman, "Girl" and "What Goes On," which describe abusive female partners, and the countercultural-themed song "The Word." Moreover, the song with the most typical older Beatles' lyrical style, "Michelle," was not chosen, nor were the songs that recognised a woman's autonomy to have multiple partners, "In My Life," and "Wait."

The wide variety of approaches to gender in the lyrics of the songs chosen and not chosen for "This Month's Beatle Song" indicate that the magazine may not have considered the lyrical themes of the songs it printed. In this way, *Beatles Book Monthly* has a disconnect with its fans as they, collectively and individually, express a different attitude towards the Beatles' evolving lyrical styles in other parts of the magazine, namely the polls and the section entitled "Letters from Beatle People." Thus, while "This Month's Beatle Song" does not provide conclusive evidence that the Beatles' evolving lyrical approaches to gender had

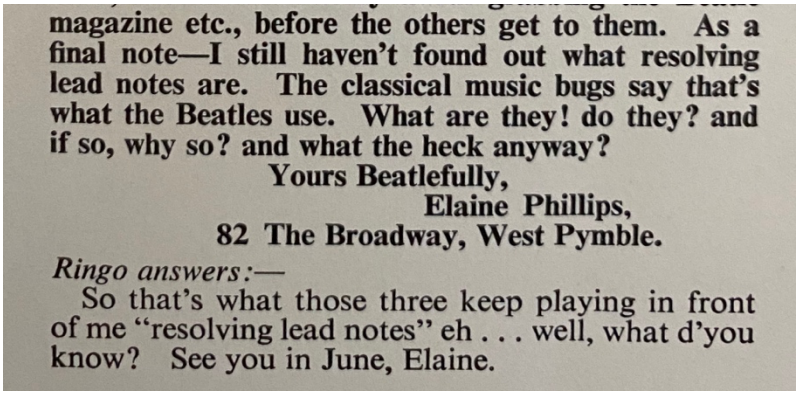
an impact on fans, it does show one key point: the magazine remained somewhat neutral in its opinions of the Beatles' lyrical evolution, which allowed readers to come to their own conclusions about the songs' approaches to gender and romantic relationships without significant interference, conclusions which they expressed in other facets of the magazine. This lack of intentional sway is particularly significant when considering other sections of *Beatles Book Monthly* that were fan-led, like the polls and fan letters, because it shows that the editors of the magazine intentionally sought out and printed fan opinions that were not neutral. In this way, the magazine remained an important platform for fans to communicate with each other, creating a sense of community through expression and discussion of opinions regarding the band's evolving lyrical themes. The next section analyses how *Beatles Book Monthly* accomplished this.

2.2.3 "Letters from Beatle People"

Every issue of *Beatles Book Monthly* included a section entitled "Letters from Beatle People." In this two-page spread, the magazine published an average of eight fan letters each month. The content of these letters typically ranged from praise or questions for the band, poems dedicated to the band, details of a sighting of the band or band members in public, and letters directed to the magazine's editor or other *Beatles Book Monthly* readers. In the earlier issues of *Beatles Book Monthly,* band members replied to a select few of the letters published. Johnny Dean often responded to a letter or two as well, while other letters were published without a response from anyone. However, by 1967, the Beatles rarely replied to fan letters published in the issues, whereas before their responses were more invested and expressive of gratitude for their fans. This change over time indicates an evolving relationship between the Beatles and their fans. Seemingly just as their lyrics in later songs were less accessible to general listeners, the band made themselves less accessible to their fans in the latter half of their career. As a result, the "Letters from Beatle People" section transitioned into more of a forum for fans to discuss their thoughts on the band with each other rather than express their opinions to the band directly.

The content of the letters published also changed between 1964 and 1967. In the earlier half of the Beatles' career, these fan letters often asked questions about the band's clothes, hair, or travel. Some questions even asked what kind of ice cream they ate or who they talked to on the phone in pictures published in previous issues. Rarely were the questions related to the band's music or lyrics; any letter published that pertained to the band's music was typically just praised the Beatles' work. This began to change in 1965, however, as more letters published in "Letters from Beatle People" were specifically about

the band's music. For example, in 1964, out of the 112 letters published in the twelve issues of *Beatles Book Monthly* that year, only one letter related to the band's music beyond praise:



magazine etc., before the others get to them. As a final note—I still haven't found out what resolving lead notes are. The classical music bugs say that's what the Beatles use. What are they! do they? and if so, why so? and what the heck anyway?

Yours Beatlefully,
Elaine Phillips,
82 The Broadway, West Pymble.

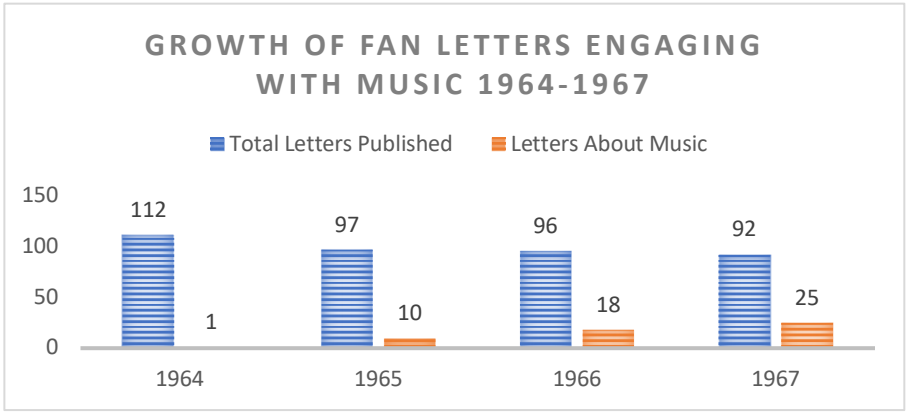
Ringo answers:—

So that's what those three keep playing in front of me "resolving lead notes" eh . . . well, what d'you know? See you in June, Elaine.

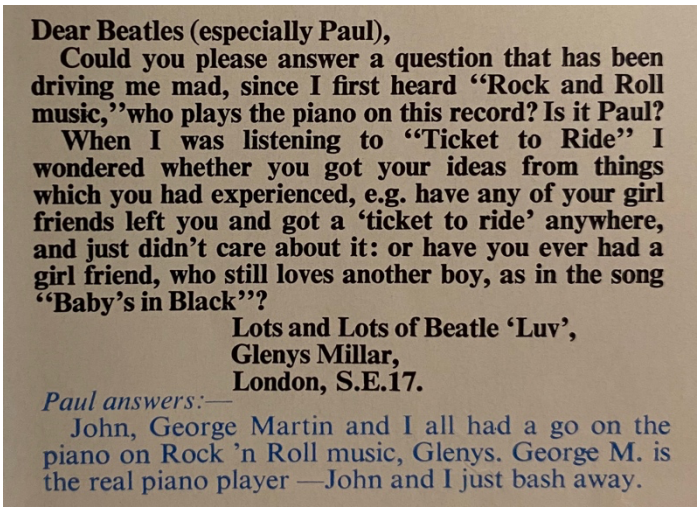
Figure 5: Beatles Book Monthly no. 11, June 1964

While Ringo's response does not answer Elaine's question, her letter is nonetheless significant as the only letter published that year to actively engage with the band's music.

Elaine's letter accounts for less than 1% of the fan letters published in 1964. By 1965, the percentage of letters like Elaine's would increase to 10% of the letters published between the issues of 1965, with 10 out of the 97 letters engaging with band's music. This would increase again to 19% in 1966 with 18 out of 96 letters and again in 1967 to 27% with 25 out of 92 letters pertaining to the Beatles' music beyond praise, as shown in the table below:



This increase in the number of letters published that engaged with the band's music indicates that, in the years the Beatles began considering their lyrics more carefully, their fans began listening to their songs more carefully as well. This is evident not only in the percentage increase of letters published about music, but also in the language used in the letters. Between 1965 and 1967, fan letters became more articulate and mature than they were in 1964 and earlier. For example, in one of the letters pertaining to music published in 1965, a fan writes:



Dear Beatles (especially Paul),

Could you please answer a question that has been driving me mad, since I first heard "Rock and Roll music,"who plays the piano on this record? Is it Paul?

When I was listening to "Ticket to Ride" I wondered whether you got your ideas from things which you had experienced, e.g. have any of your girl friends left you and got a 'ticket to ride' anywhere, and just didn't care about it: or have you ever had a girl friend, who still loves another boy, as in the song "Baby's in Black"?

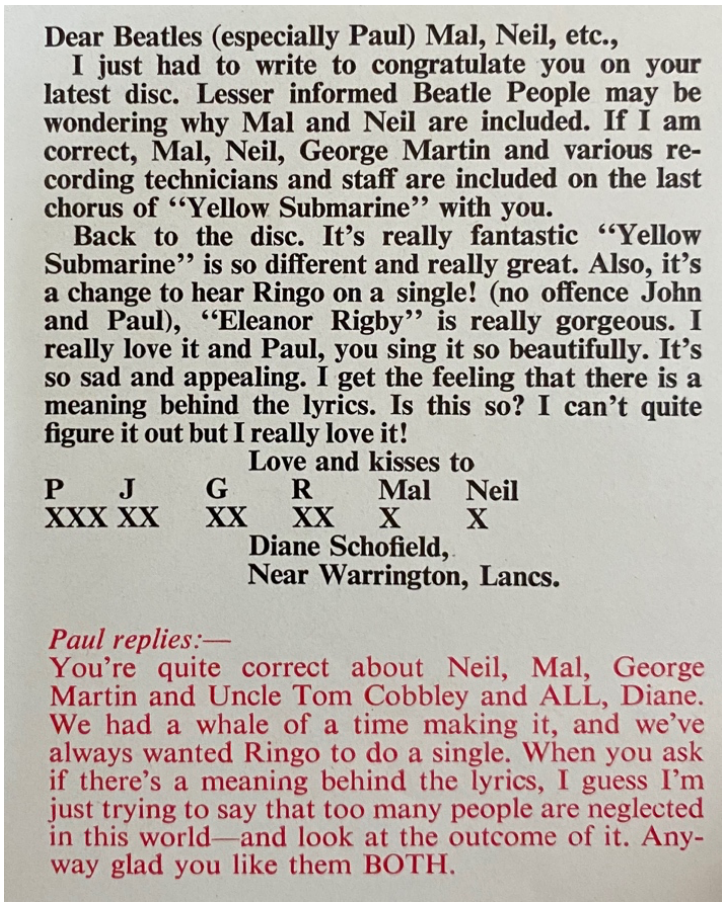
Lots and Lots of Beatle 'Luv',
Glenys Millar,
London, S.E.17.

Paul answers:—

John, George Martin and I all had a go on the piano on Rock 'n Roll music, Glenys. George M. is the real piano player —John and I just bash away.

Figure 6: Beatles Book Monthly no. 22, May 1965

This letter is significant because it shows that the Beatles' fans were not only hearing the story line told by a song's lyrics, but they were also going a step further in trying to understand the story, to make sense of why the band would sing of their girlfriends in this way, and how it compared to how they sang of girlfriends in earlier songs. In this way, these Beatle People not only noticed the Beatles' lyrical evolution during this time, but they were actively engaging with it. This kind of fan engagement with lyrical meaning is seen again in other letters, like Diane's from 1966:



Dear Beatles (especially Paul) Mal, Neil, etc.,

I just had to write to congratulate you on your latest disc. Lesser informed Beatle People may be wondering why Mal and Neil are included. If I am correct, Mal, Neil, George Martin and various recording technicians and staff are included on the last chorus of "Yellow Submarine" with you.

Back to the disc. It's really fantastic "Yellow Submarine" is so different and really great. Also, it's a change to hear Ringo on a single! (no offence John and Paul), "Eleanor Rigby" is really gorgeous. I really love it and Paul, you sing it so beautifully. It's so sad and appealing. I get the feeling that there is a meaning behind the lyrics. Is this so? I can't quite figure it out but I really love it!

Love and kisses to

P	J	G	R	Mal	Neil
XXX	XX	XX	XX	X	X

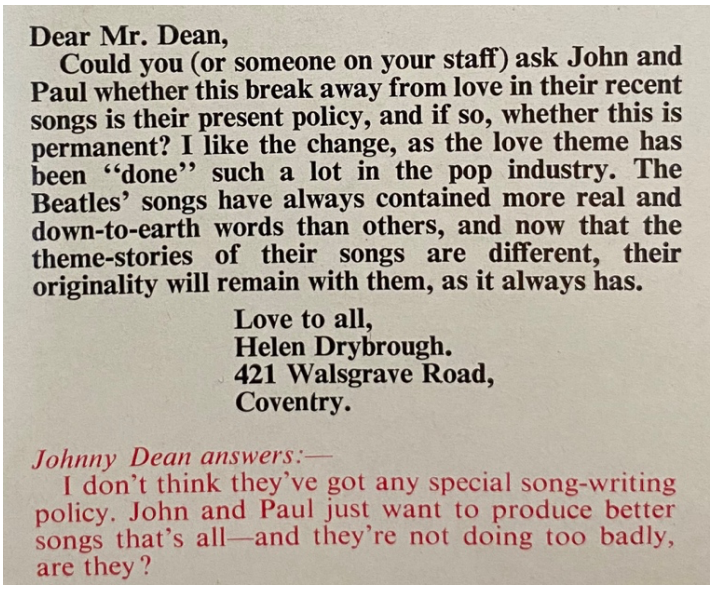
Diane Schofield,
Near Warrington, Lancs.

Paul replies:—

You're quite correct about Neil, Mal, George Martin and Uncle Tom Cobbley and ALL, Diane. We had a whale of a time making it, and we've always wanted Ringo to do a single. When you ask if there's a meaning behind the lyrics, I guess I'm just trying to say that too many people are neglected in this world—and look at the outcome of it. Anyway glad you like them BOTH.

Figure 7: Beatles Book Monthly no. 38, Sept 1966

Some fans whose letters were published were not entirely pleased with the Beatles' lyrical and musical evolution, while others welcomed the change. In the *Beatles Book Monthly's* last issue of 1966, one fan named Helen wrote:



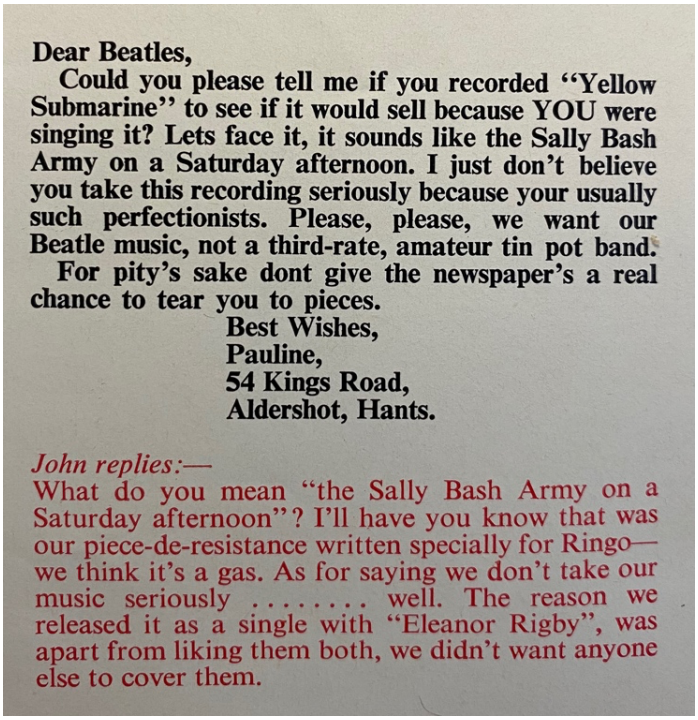
Dear Mr. Dean,
Could you (or someone on your staff) ask John and Paul whether this break away from love in their recent songs is their present policy, and if so, whether this is permanent? I like the change, as the love theme has been "done" such a lot in the pop industry. The Beatles' songs have always contained more real and down-to-earth words than others, and now that the theme-stories of their songs are different, their originality will remain with them, as it always has.

Love to all,
Helen Drybrough.
421 Walsgrave Road,
Coventry.

Johnny Dean answers:—
I don't think they've got any special song-writing policy. John and Paul just want to produce better songs that's all—and they're not doing too badly, are they?

Figure 8: Beatles Book Monthly no. 41, Dec 1966

Meanwhile, other fans were not as pleased with the Beatles' break away from their "yeah, yeah, yeah" phase and typical love songs, as Pauline and Jan and Chris' letters show:

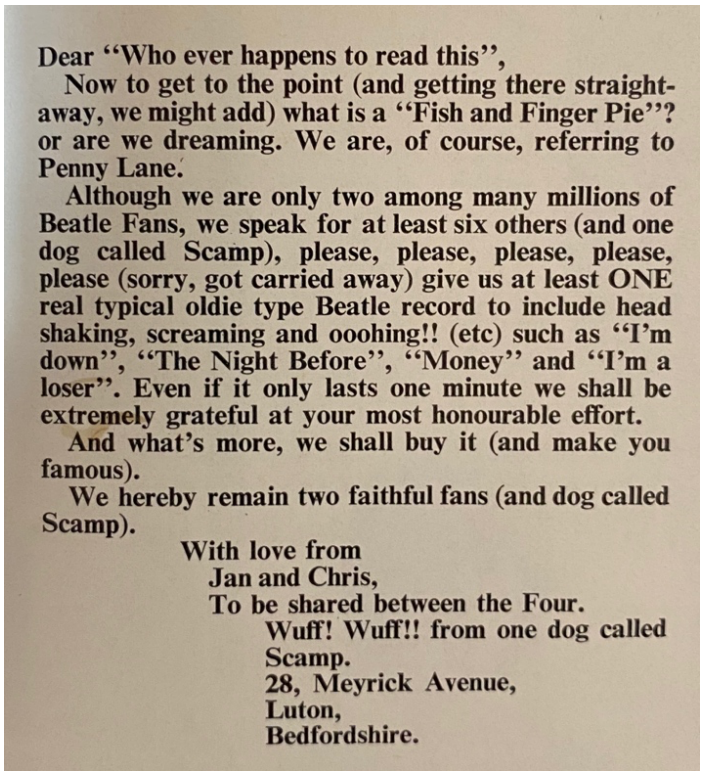


Dear Beatles,
Could you please tell me if you recorded "Yellow Submarine" to see if it would sell because YOU were singing it? Lets face it, it sounds like the Sally Bash Army on a Saturday afternoon. I just don't believe you take this recording seriously because your usually such perfectionists. Please, please, we want our Beatle music, not a third-rate, amateur tin pot band.
For pity's sake dont give the newspaper's a real chance to tear you to pieces.

Best Wishes,
Pauline,
54 Kings Road,
Aldershot, Hants.

John replies:—
What do you mean "the Sally Bash Army on a Saturday afternoon"? I'll have you know that was our piece-de-resistance written specially for Ringo—we think it's a gas. As for saying we don't take our music seriously ..... well. The reason we released it as a single with "Eleanor Rigby", was apart from liking them both, we didn't want anyone else to cover them.

Figure 9: Beatles Book Monthly no. 38, Sept 1966



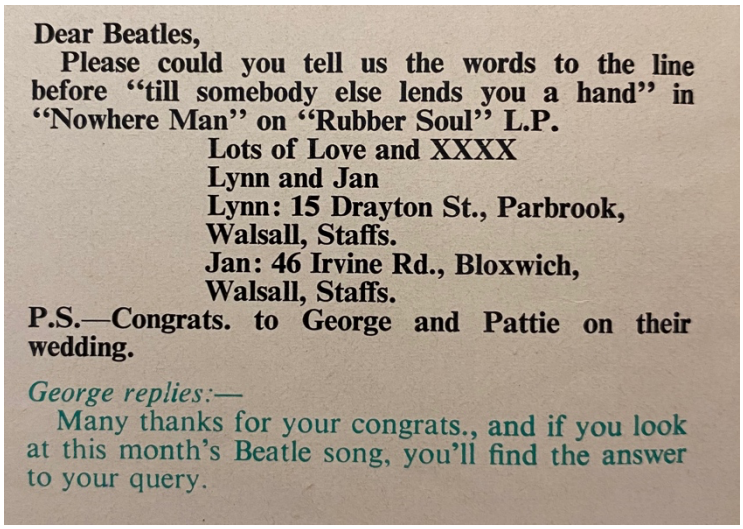
Dear "Who ever happens to read this",
Now to get to the point (and getting there straight-away, we might add) what is a "Fish and Finger Pie"? or are we dreaming. We are, of course, referring to Penny Lane.
Although we are only two among many millions of Beatle Fans, we speak for at least six others (and one dog called Scamp), please, please, please, please, please (sorry, got carried away) give us at least ONE real typical oldie type Beatle record to include head shaking, screaming and ooohing!! (etc) such as "I'm down", "The Night Before", "Money" and "I'm a loser". Even if it only lasts one minute we shall be extremely grateful at your most honourable effort.
And what's more, we shall buy it (and make you famous).
We hereby remain two faithful fans (and dog called Scamp).

With love from
Jan and Chris,
To be shared between the Four.
Wuff! Wuff!! from one dog called Scamp.
28, Meyrick Avenue,
Luton,
Bedfordshire.

Figure 10: Beatles Book Monthly no. 46, May 1967

While Helen's letter contrasts with the latter two, all three are indicative of fan engagement with the Beatles' evolving thematic range and lyric writing techniques. Not only were fans like these four noticing the Beatles' transition during this time, but they were also forming opinions of the changes and feeling the need to express said opinions in a public forum. Therefore, their opinionated expressions serve as evidence that the Beatles' lyrical transitions during 1965 and 1966 were, in fact, having a great impact on many fans, that many fans were conscious of the changes and desired explanations for them. Further, the majority of the letters published in *Beatles Book Monthly* between 1964 and 1967 that pertained to the Beatles' music discussed songs' approaches to women (like Glenys' letter on "Ticket to Ride" and Diane's letter on "Eleanor Rigby") or approaches to love (like Helen, Jan and Chris's letters).

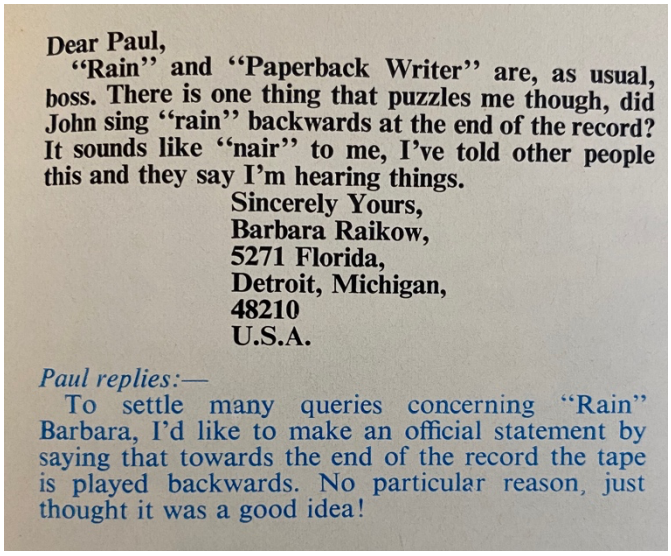
In addition to fan letters' common interest in Beatle songs about women and romance, there was a deep and careful practice of making sure fans heard each lyric in each song exactly as it had been written by the Beatles. As queries around the meaning of lyrical themes increased through the mid-sixties, so did fan letters asking for clarification on song lyrics, as the following letters show:



Dear Beatles,
Please could you tell us the words to the line before "till somebody else lends you a hand" in "Nowhere Man" on "Rubber Soul" L.P.
Lots of Love and XXXX
Lynn and Jan
Lynn: 15 Drayton St., Parbrook,
Walsall, Staffs.
Jan: 46 Irvine Rd., Bloxwich,
Walsall, Staffs.
P.S.—Congrats. to George and Pattie on their wedding.

George replies:—
Many thanks for your congrats., and if you look at this month's Beatle song, you'll find the answer to your query.

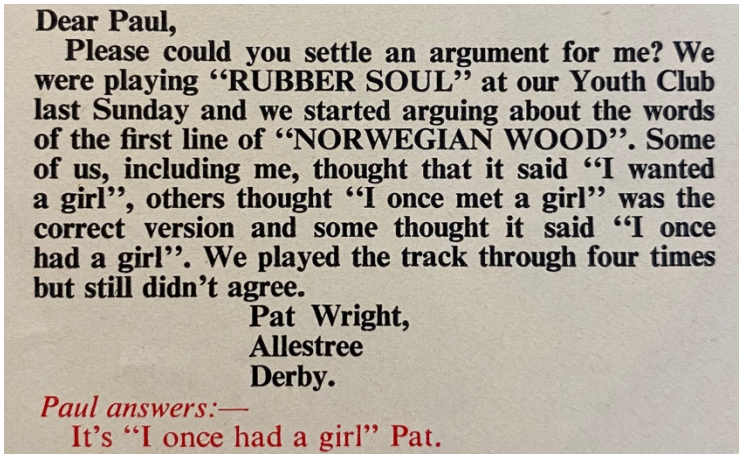
Figure 11: Beatles Book Monthly no. 33, April 1966



Dear Paul,
"Rain" and "Paperback Writer" are, as usual, boss. There is one thing that puzzles me though, did John sing "rain" backwards at the end of the record? It sounds like "nair" to me, I've told other people this and they say I'm hearing things.
Sincerely Yours,
Barbara Raikow,
5271 Florida,
Detroit, Michigan,
48210
U.S.A.

Paul replies:—
To settle many queries concerning "Rain" Barbara, I'd like to make an official statement by saying that towards the end of the record the tape is played backwards. No particular reason, just thought it was a good idea!

Figure 12: Beatles Book Monthly no. 36, July 1966



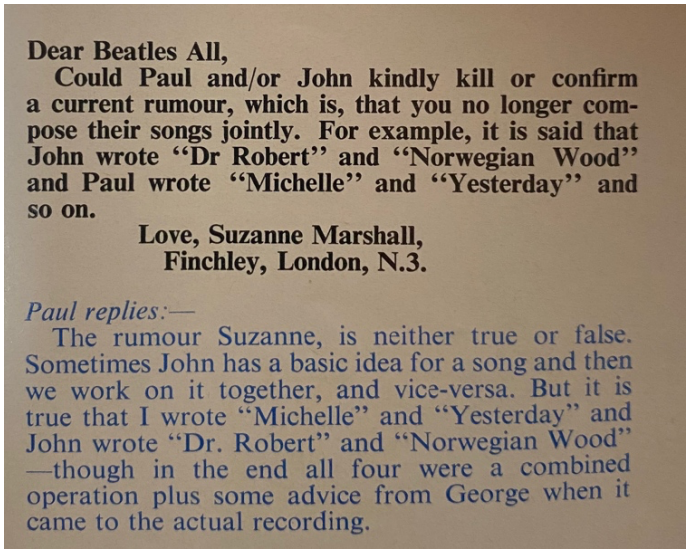
Dear Paul,
Please could you settle an argument for me? We were playing "RUBBER SOUL" at our Youth Club last Sunday and we started arguing about the words of the first line of "NORWEGIAN WOOD". Some of us, including me, thought that it said "I wanted a girl", others thought "I once met a girl" was the correct version and some thought it said "I once had a girl". We played the track through four times but still didn't agree.
Pat Wright,
Allestree
Derby.

Paul answers:—
It's "I once had a girl" Pat.

Figure 13: Beatles Book Monthly no. 32, Mar 1966

Letters like the three shown above convey that many fans were vigilantly examining the Beatles' lyrics, which indicates that fans not only cared about what the Beatles said in their songs, but *how* they said it as well.

Finally, the increase in fan letters published in this four-year period that pertained to the band's music also convey fan consciousness of the Beatles' individual contributions as band members and the way in which the band intended for their songs to be heard. For example, a letter published in the *Beatles Book Monthly* August 1966 issue shows another way in which Beatle fans were listening to their songs in a new manner:



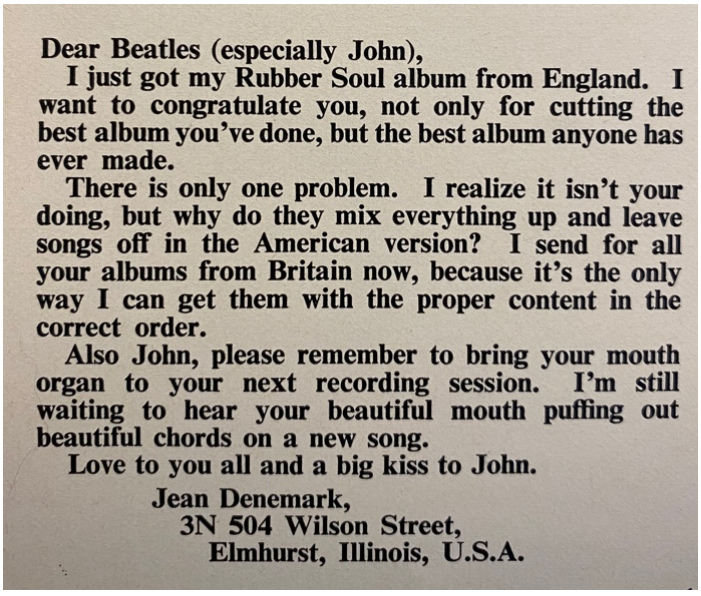
Dear Beatles All,
Could Paul and/or John kindly kill or confirm a current rumour, which is, that you no longer compose their songs jointly. For example, it is said that John wrote "Dr Robert" and "Norwegian Wood" and Paul wrote "Michelle" and "Yesterday" and so on.

Love, Suzanne Marshall,
Finchley, London, N.3.

Paul replies:—
The rumour Suzanne, is neither true or false. Sometimes John has a basic idea for a song and then we work on it together, and vice-versa. But it is true that I wrote "Michelle" and "Yesterday" and John wrote "Dr. Robert" and "Norwegian Wood" —though in the end all four were a combined operation plus some advice from George when it came to the actual recording.

Figure 14: Beatles Book Monthly no. 37, Aug 1966

The publication of this letter from Suzanne serves as evidence that the Beatles' fans were also taking note of which Beatle members were contributing which songs. Similarly, the following letter from Jean demonstrates an awareness of the intentional order of songs on the Beatles' albums, starting with *Rubber Soul*, and a desire to hear the album "with the proper content in the correct order:"



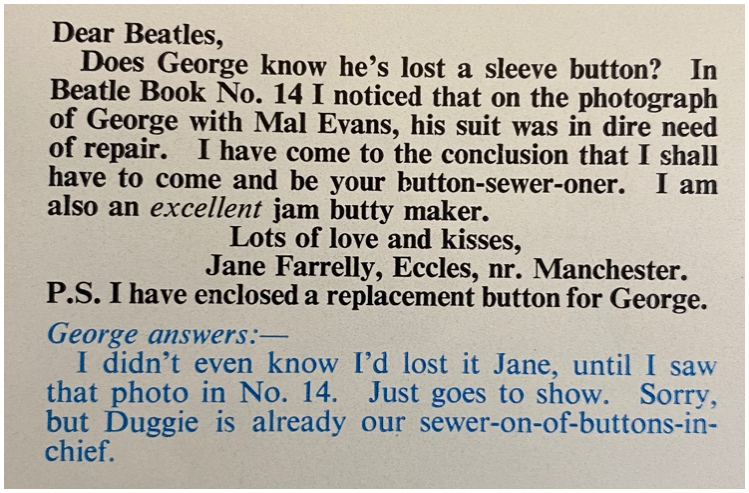
Dear Beatles (especially John),
I just got my Rubber Soul album from England. I want to congratulate you, not only for cutting the best album you've done, but the best album anyone has ever made.
There is only one problem. I realize it isn't your doing, but why do they mix everything up and leave songs off in the American version? I send for all your albums from Britain now, because it's the only way I can get them with the proper content in the correct order.
Also John, please remember to bring your mouth organ to your next recording session. I'm still waiting to hear your beautiful mouth puffing out beautiful chords on a new song.
Love to you all and a big kiss to John.

Jean Denemark,
3N 504 Wilson Street,
Elmhurst, Illinois, U.S.A.

Figure 15: Beatles Book Monthly no. 31, Feb 1966

Jean's letter touches on the issue previously mentioned about the difference in the Beatles' music releases between the US and the UK. Though it is not reasonable to infer how many fans were like Jean based on her one letter, the publication of her letter in "Letters from Beatle People" does indicate that at least some fans were aware that the Beatles had intentionally ordered their songs on *Rubber Soul* and that this order was not replicated on the US's version of the record. Moreover, some fans even made the effort to import the "correct" version of the album, demonstrating that hearing the album in its intended order was important to fans like Jean.

Alongside the increase in fan letters between 1964 and 1967 pertaining to music, the general fan letters published during these years also show a change in the fans' perception of the band as their letters become more mature. For example, in 1964, the average letter included a poem written by a fan to praise the band or a question about a picture of the band:



Dear Beatles,

Does George know he's lost a sleeve button? In Beatle Book No. 14 I noticed that on the photograph of George with Mal Evans, his suit was in dire need of repair. I have come to the conclusion that I shall have to come and be your button-sewer-oner. I am also an *excellent* jam butty maker.

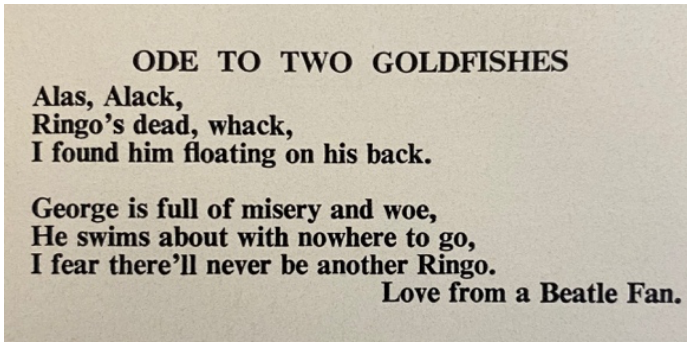
Lots of love and kisses,
Jane Farrelly, Eccles, nr. Manchester.

P.S. I have enclosed a replacement button for George.

George answers:—

I didn't even know I'd lost it Jane, until I saw that photo in No. 14. Just goes to show. Sorry, but Duggie is already our sewer-on-of-buttons-in-chief.

Figure 16: Beatles Book Monthly no.15, Oct 1964.



ODE TO TWO GOLDFISHES

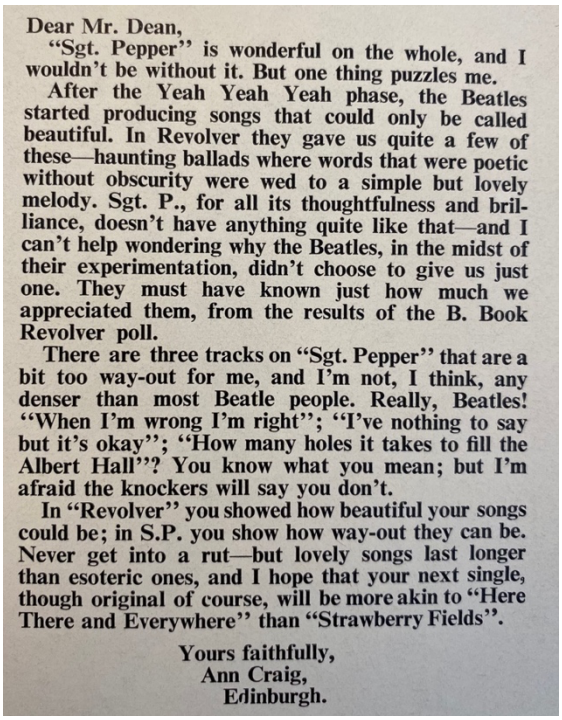
Alas, Alack,
Ringo's dead, whack,
I found him floating on his back.

George is full of misery and woe,
He swims about with nowhere to go,
I fear there'll never be another Ringo.

Love from a Beatle Fan.

Figure 17: Beatles Book Monthly no 17, Dec 1964

By 1967, letters were more commonly directed to the magazine in general or to other fans, rather than the Beatles themselves, and these letters were more often about the band's place in the music industry and history:



Dear Mr. Dean,

"Sgt. Pepper" is wonderful on the whole, and I wouldn't be without it. But one thing puzzles me.

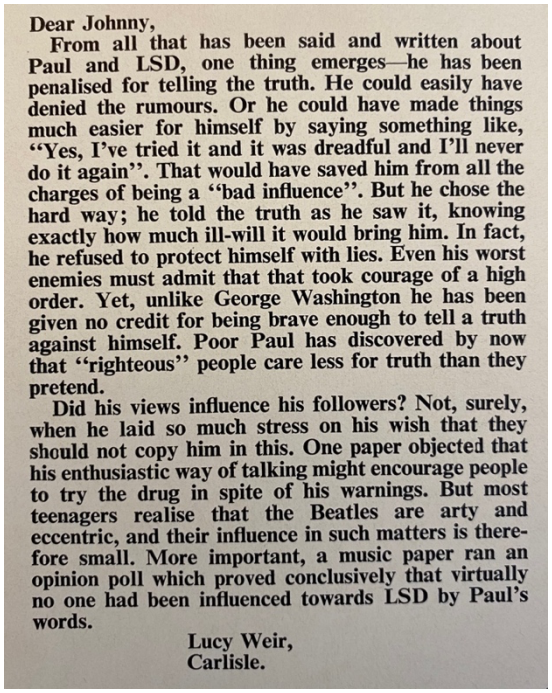
After the Yeah Yeah Yeah phase, the Beatles started producing songs that could only be called beautiful. In Revolver they gave us quite a few of these—haunting ballads where words that were poetic without obscurity were wed to a simple but lovely melody. Sgt. P., for all its thoughtfulness and brilliance, doesn't have anything quite like that—and I can't help wondering why the Beatles, in the midst of their experimentation, didn't choose to give us just one. They must have known just how much we appreciated them, from the results of the B. Book Revolver poll.

There are three tracks on "Sgt. Pepper" that are a bit too way-out for me, and I'm not, I think, any denser than most Beatle people. Really, Beatles! "When I'm wrong I'm right"; "I've nothing to say but it's okay"; "How many holes it takes to fill the Albert Hall"? You know what you mean; but I'm afraid the knockers will say you don't.

In "Revolver" you showed how beautiful your songs could be; in S.P. you show how way-out they can be. Never get into a rut—but lovely songs last longer than esoteric ones, and I hope that your next single, though original of course, will be more akin to "Here There and Everywhere" than "Strawberry Fields".

Yours faithfully,
Ann Craig,
Edinburgh.

Figure 18: Beatles Book Monthly no. 48, July 1967



Dear Johnny,

From all that has been said and written about Paul and LSD, one thing emerges—he has been penalised for telling the truth. He could easily have denied the rumours. Or he could have made things much easier for himself by saying something like, "Yes, I've tried it and it was dreadful and I'll never do it again". That would have saved him from all the charges of being a "bad influence". But he chose the hard way; he told the truth as he saw it, knowing exactly how much ill-will it would bring him. In fact, he refused to protect himself with lies. Even his worst enemies must admit that that took courage of a high order. Yet, unlike George Washington he has been given no credit for being brave enough to tell a truth against himself. Poor Paul has discovered by now that "righteous" people care less for truth than they pretend.

Did his views influence his followers? Not, surely, when he laid so much stress on his wish that they should not copy him in this. One paper objected that his enthusiastic way of talking might encourage people to try the drug in spite of his warnings. But most teenagers realise that the Beatles are arty and eccentric, and their influence in such matters is therefore small. More important, a music paper ran an opinion poll which proved conclusively that virtually no one had been influenced towards LSD by Paul's words.

Lucy Weir,
Carlisle.

Figure 19: Beatles Book Monthly no. 49, Aug 1967

An analysis of the near 400 fan letters published in Beatles Book Monthly between 1964 and 1967 reveals several key trends emerging among the increasing number of fan letters whose content was on the band's music beyond basic praise. Firstly, on the most basic level, fans noticed the changes made by the Beatles in their lyrical styles and instrumentation. Secondly, and more significantly, fans developed opinions of these changes on such a level that they felt the need to express them on a public platform often directed to the band itself. Next, some of these expressions were more nuanced than others. While some fans wrote to the band enquiring about specific lyrics, others wrote asking for the meaning behind their words. Meanwhile, some fans embraced the Beatles' lyrical evolution while others wished the band would return to their older style of songs. Finally, these fan letters also indicate the increasing trend of fans paying close attention to the band members' individual contributions to albums and to the bands' intentional order of songs on their LPs. All the while, the fan letters published in these four years became more articulate over time, indicating a maturation in the fans alongside the Beatles.

These changes in form and content of fan letters published over four years seem stark and vast. It is important to remember, however, that every letter published was approved by the magazine's editor, Johnny Dean. While Dean's criteria for choosing which letters to publish out of the thousands he was sent remain only known to him, it is reasonable to assume that he chose fan letters he thought would benefit the magazine, which in turn means they would need to be appeal to more than a few fans. As the editor, he had an incentive to

select and publish letters he deemed to be significant not only to the fans who wrote them but to the fans that would read them as well. Even taking into account any potential bias in Dean's choice for published fan letters, therefore, the letters published in the "Letters from Beatle People" section open a window into the minds of Beatles fans around the world as they heard and made sense of the Beatles' music.

While the fan-led sections of *Beatles Book Monthly* establish that fans were aware of the Beatles' lyrical transitions in 1965 and 1966, they do not show in any direct way how fans may have felt from the Beatles' changing approaches to women and romance specifically. Perhaps this is due to the public platform of *Beatles Book Monthly* and the need for letters to be succinct. It is also conceivable that fans did not have the language to express any effects the Beatles' new lyrics were having on them as such feminist language would not have been widely accessible or prevalent in the mid-sixties. Using gender theory and current Beatle scholarship, the following chapter will piece together the existing rhetoric around the Beatles and gender to show how the evidence of fan opinion provided by *Beatles Book Monthly* fits into the present state of the subject's field.

CHAPTER 3: CONCLUSION: THE BEATLES AND GENDER

The current conversation among Beatle scholars about the Beatles' representations of gender as a band and through their music is divided. Some scholars, like Steven Stark, maintain that the Beatles were intentionally and consistently feminine in their representation and feminist in their music while others, like Martin King, Pauliina Kankainen and Sheila Whiteley, contend the opposite. There is little middle ground between these two sides of the debate as most Beatle scholarship continues to gloss over gender politics when examining the Beatles' history and impact. By considering the lyrical evolution between 1965 and 1966 in combination with the evidence of fan reception exhibited in *Beatles Book Monthly*, this thesis addresses that gap by a) showing how the Beatles were dynamic rather than stagnant in their approaches to gender, b) conveying that attempting to define the Beatles' representation of gender ignores that the band held different meanings for different groups, and c) discussing why it is important to remain aware of presentism while discussing gender in an historical setting.

As described in the introduction, much of the most popular or well-known Beatle scholarship refrains from significantly discussing the gender politics in the Beatles' music, legacy or fanbase. There appears to be a trend in the easily accessible books and films on the Beatles to gloss over gender in their discussions, while less accessible, often academic, journal articles or books do take the time to consider gender theory in their versions of the Beatles' legacy. This issue of accessibility, which includes monetary and language barriers, no doubt continues to form the public's view of the Beatles in a way that centres masculinity. In other words, it is a privilege to speak here about existing discourses on the Beatles relationship with gender, and I hope this thesis serves as a call for more accessible discussions of this topic of study for the public.

In this discussion of gender's intersectionality with the Beatles, what remains important is what the band meant to its fans. It is through presentism that we can discern the gender politics at play in the Beatles legacy, the overarching stereotypes and gender roles the Beatles both defied and replicated, the dichotomy of masculine versus feminine, cerebral versus physical, active versus passive. These descriptions are important in aiding the collective understanding of the Beatles' legacy, but they also represent how we understand the Beatles *now*. It needs bearing in mind that today's perception of the Beatles cannot match the perception of its fans. The Beatles, whether in their feminine, androgynous, or masculine iterations, were symbols of freedom and sexuality to Beatlemaniacs. Allow Patricia Gallo-

Stenman's diary entry from early 1964 help us recall where the Beatles stood in the mind of their average fan at the birth of Beatlemania:

> "Why the Beatles? Why are we so excited over them? In my own case, I guess, it is because they are so different. They come from far away with a different yet familiar look and sound...They are rough yet smooth. Enchanting yet dangerous. OK, I also need something good to listen to and look at right now. I'm fourteen. I'm old enough to travel across town but too young to date. I can wear lipstick but not see certain movies. I get drilled at school in 'exciting' subjects—Latin, algebra, and science. I need something to keep me from utter boredom."[95]

3.1 The Beatles as Feminine and Androgynous: Early Years

The majority of scholarship pertaining to the Beatles' play with gender focuses on their performance and image as a band rather than their music or lyrics. For example, some scholars note that the band's structure, with no clear band leader, challenges the traditional masculine image of rock and roll groups.[96] Further, the Beatles' overwhelmingly female fanbase who screamed at the sight of the band placed its members in the traditionally female position of being "ogled at," reversing the conventional role of the male gaze.[97] Similarly, their elevation to a near god-like status by their fans through Beatlemania feminised the band's reputation:

> Beatlemania was very much a phenomenon about the reaction of others, based on a relationship between the Beatles and their fans which was then fed back to all through the mass media. This phenomenon was populated predominantly by female fans and often, therefore, seen as a feminised in itself, and linked through the disciplines of crowd theory and social psychology to weakness in the female constitution…at work in Beatlemania.[98]

These aspects of the Beatles' public image portrayed them as somewhat androgynous or feminine as they contributed to the band's divergence from the traditionally masculine characteristics of rock and roll groups. Their Liverpudlian skiffle-group roots and early influence from girl-groups also painted the band in a feminine light, with their lyrical use of female perspectives in early songs like "She Loves You" deviating from other, more

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[95] Patricia Gallo-Stenman, *Diary of a Beatlemaniac: A Fab Insider's Look at the Beatles* Era (Malvern: Cynren, 2018), 27.
[96] Steven Stark, "First Rumblings of a Gender Revolution," *Meet the Beatles* (New York: Harper Collins, 2005), 133.
[97] *Ibid.*
[98] Martin King, *Men, Masculinity and the Beatles*, New York: Ashgate Publishing, 2013, 5.

masculine, rock and roll groups who typically placed women as the antagonist in their songs.[99]

The band's bending and blending of traditionally masculine and traditionally feminine characteristics in appearances and musical techniques was particularly salient in the United States, which, at the time Beatlemania hit, was extremely rigid in gender distinctions.[100] As a society preoccupied with, yet afraid of, sex, the Beatles represented a vision of freedom for mid-century US culture: "Theirs was a vision of sexuality freed from the shadow of gender inequality because the group mocked the gender distinctions that bifurcated the American landscape."[101]

From a different perspective, the combination of the Beatles' outwardly androgynous performance and feminine roots is agreed upon by most Beatle scholars to have set the band apart from the traditionally masculine image of rock and roll groups. Further, this androgyny is often noted for its significance to the band's success and importance to the fans participating in Beatlemania. The Beatles' androgynous image was one of the reasons young women were so attracted to the band. As one fan put it, "Women had screamed and swooned for other men who displayed an androgynous quality—the closest thing to a powerful woman."[102] In this way, the Beatles' bending of gender roles in their early years served as an important tool for their young female fanbase to recognise and break out of their own gender barriers:

> 'The women's movement didn't just happen,' said Marcy Lanza, an early American devotee of the band. 'It was an awareness that came over you—that you could be your own person. For many of us, that began with the Beatles. They told us we could do anything.'[103]

However, as the Beatles' music and lyrics began to evolve in the mid-sixties, so did their image and relationship with gender roles. Some scholars argue that the Beatles never wavered in their respect for women, lyrically or physically.[104] Others suggest that the band's respect for women increased throughout their career as they became more involved in

[99] Stark, "First Rumblings of a Gender Revolution," 129-130.
[100] Barbara Ehrenreich et al, "Beatlemania," *Re-Making Love: The Feminization of Sex* (New York: Double Day, 1986) 34-35.
[101] *Ibid*, 35.
[102] Stark, "First Rumblings of a Gender Revolution," 137.
[103] *Ibid.*
[104] *Ibid.* 132.

politics.[105] Both of these perspectives have their faults, however, as they ignore the Beatles' fanbase in their analysis and they fail to consider the Beatles' continued role in the counterculture and how their approaches to gender were influenced by the counterculture's philosophies.

3.2 The Beatles as Masculine: Ties to the Counterculture

As mentioned previously, the Beatles were heavily influenced by the counterculture of the sixties from the start of their career, and their participation in the counterculture became more publicly recognised as their career progressed. It is not necessarily true that the band became increasingly intertwined with the counterculture in the latter half of their career as they had always been participants in it, but rather their involvement in the countercultural movement became more public and therefore more recognised throughout their career. This recognition began to grow during their transitional years in the mid-sixties, with the lyrical and musical evolutions already discussed in Chapter 1. To foster a more nuanced understanding of the Beatles' approach to gender and the impact their lyrical evolution may have had on their fanbase, the Beatles must also be considered for their participation in the cultural movements around them, including particularly their role in the counterculture. This section will discuss the counterculture's overall representation of women and assess how the Beatles fit into the counterculture's stereotypes.

The foundational philosophy of the counterculture movement of the 1960s focused on freedom and peace while remaining mostly apolitical (not to be confused with the New Left).[106] Characterised by long-haired hippies, psychedelic drugs, rock and roll and sexual liberation, the counterculture is conventionally understood as an incredibly liberal movement. Historical memory of the counterculture has grown to be falsely idyllic, however, overlooking, or even deliberately erasing, the undercurrents of sexism and racism that prevailed within the counterculture's philosophy and art. Instead, the counterculture remains known for its search for individual enlightenment and freedom for adventure, characteristics that were largely reserved for its white middle-class male participants.

Gretchen Lemke-Santangelo reminds scholars of the counterculture's sexist history by examining the representation of women in its art, mainly focusing on poster art, films and

[105] Pauliina Kankainen, "'She's Not a Girl Who Misses Much'–The Representation of Women in the Beatles' Song Lyrics," University of Tampere Pro Gradu Thesis, Spring 2008, 10-11.

[106] For a close study of the counterculture of the 1960s, see Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society & Its Youthful Opposition* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970) and Charles Perry, *The Haight Ashbury: A History* (New York: Wenner Books, 2005).

literature. Lemke-Santangelo asserts that the counterculture's representation of women was confined to four distinct roles: the sexually promiscuous tease, the earth-mother, the spiritual and magical goddess, and the child-like virgin.[107] These stereotypes are echoed by Sheila Whiteley in Women and Popular Music, where she describes a trend in countercultural music where women are "etherealised and inscribed within a dreamlike and unreal world, detached from reality, defined by the male as a fantasy escape *from* reality."[108] While these four tropes cover the extent to which women are portrayed in countercultural art, women participating in the counterculture were confined to similar roles, stuck in a double bind where their only method of participating in the counterculture was through their bodies. In other words, countercultural women had to be "sexually liberated" in order to be seen as true members of the movement; if they remained traditional or conservative with sex and their bodies, they remained part of the older, "straight" world. The strict limitations of these tropes and double binds pushed women to the periphery of the counterculture's story. Hippie women were typically only recognised by their relationship to men. As Lemke-Santangelo argues, "Counterculture music, composed largely by and for young men, not only relegated women to its physical margins, it replicated the superficial images and stereotypes contained in graphic and print media."[109]

Lemke-Santangelo's claim is not entirely true, but it does point to a major, often overlooked or forgotten issue within the counterculture. The Beatles are an excellent case study for Lemke-Santangelo's argument and proposed sexist tropes as their music evolved from love-related thematic ranges to philosophical explorations. To begin, the Beatles' early career does not fit into Lemke-Santangelo's theory. Women were quite literally at the centre of nearly every Beatles' song. The female characters of the Beatles' early songs were never overtly sexualised, even when the lyrics alluded to sex, as in "Please Please Me" or "Hold Me Tight," nor were they ever portrayed as earth-mothers or spiritual goddesses. The Beatles did, however, have a number of early songs whose lyrics fall into Lemke-Santangelo's innocent, childlike virgin trope, like "I Saw Her Standing There" and "Little Child."[110] In

[107] Gretchen Lemke-Santangelo, *Daughters of Aquarius: Women of the Sixties Counterculture* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009), 24-25.
[108] Whiteley, Sheila, Repressive Representations, Woman and Popular Music: Sexuality, Identity and Subjectivity, (New York: Routledge, 2000), 35.
[109] *Ibid.* 27.
[110] Countercultural music is notorious for its sexualisation of underage women. Many popular countercultural artists are guilty of having songs like these, including the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, and the Rolling Stones. For more on this, see the section "3.3 Come Up the Years by Jefferson Airplane" in my paper "Under My Thumb: The Perpetuation of Sexism in the Music of 1960s American Counterculture," *University of North Carolina at Asheville's Journal of Undergraduate Research*, May 2019.

this way, up until 1966, the Beatles stood apart from the countercultural tropes set forth by Lemke-Santangelo and Whiteley.

Between 1965 and 1966, the Beatles' lyrical evolution revealed a transition in the band's approach to women that would, by 1967, align them with other countercultural artists of the time. The increase in the band's songs that made no reference to women, or placed women as background characters, represents a push of women into the periphery of the Beatles' art. From 1967, when women were mentioned in songs, they fit into the four tropes: the earth-mother appears in songs such as "Lady Madonna" and "Mother Nature's Son" the sexually promiscuous tease in songs like "Sexy Sadie" and "Lovely Rita," and the spiritual goddess in songs like "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" and "Let it Be." While the Beatles do not repeat their earlier lyrical fascination with underage girls, they do heavily replicate the innocent and naive trope, for example in "Dear Prudence" and "She Came in Through the Bathroom Window."

The Beatles' work released between these two nearly dichotomous eras of the band's career become important markers for how the transition occurred as they wrote songs that faced in both directions of their career and the social movements of the 1960s. In other words, the band's music produced between 1965 and 1966 offer insight into the band's changing relationship with gender roles through a countercultural lens. This transition counters the idea that the band never wavered in their respect or representation of women. Moreover, the band's ties with the apolitical countercultural movement weaken the argument that their work increased in respect for women as their music largely avoided politics, and songs that did have political undertones, like "Revolution" and "Black Bird," made no mention of women or gender roles.

3.3 Assessing the Beatles' Evolving Relationship with Gender

Considering Lemke-Santangelo's evidence against these two existing arguments about the Beatles' relationship with gender, a different theory is unveiled: as the Beatles' career progressed, their feminisation, androgyny and lyrical recognition of women regressed. They strayed from their girl-group roots as they turned to more psychedelic and philosophical themes, recreating their image as a more masculine band. This increase in masculinity is apparent both on the surface, for example with the band's use of deeper vocals rather than higher-pitched harmonies, and beneath, as they became what Ian Inglis calls "men of ideas," who transformed popular culture into an intellectual platform beyond a space

for entertainment.[111] Bearing in mind the idea presented in Chapter 2 that men are associated with the cerebral while women are associated with the physical, the band's transition into intellectuals also meant a parallel transition into a more masculine entity. Regarding the Beatles as "men of ideas" whose later career became more associated with the masculine idea of the cerebral also explains why more attention is paid to their later work. In contrast, their early work, associated with the physicality of the music and the physical response it evoked in the band's fans, was seen as more feminine, and likewise less relevant or significant by music media and the counterculture alike as these groups kept women on the periphery of their stories. Because of this, it has only been in recent years that scholars have begun to recognise and assess the importance of the Beatles' association with and representation of gender in their lyrics and performance.

Establishing that the Beatles were dynamic in their relationship with gender allows for a more nuanced understanding of the band's lyrical evolution's impact on its fans. This can be seen throughout their career with their general decrease in feminism through their increase in public association with the counterculture. Thus, there is a predisposition to argue that the band's increase in songs that spoke negatively about women, or avoided women entirely, in their later years would have had a negative impact on their female fanbase because they were no longer positively represented by their idols. That is to say, the band's early androgynous image and feminine roots in combination with their female-centred songs allowed for their predominantly female fanbase to connect deeply, physically and emotionally, to the band, which empowered these girls and created a sense of comradery with other fans. By the latter half of the band's career, their image had become far more masculine and their lyrical range significantly less focused on women, and thus it would be easy to say that their female fans became disillusioned with the band, that the songs that spoke negatively about women had a negative impact on female listeners.

However, such a claim would be erroneous for two key reasons. First, the evidence provided by *Beatles Book Monthly* does not support this argument. While the band grew to be more masculine in their later years, female fans may not have noticed or cared because the Beatles still represented a sexual and emotional freedom that fans had not been able to express previously. The correspondence in "Letters from Beatle People" demonstrates this: fans were interacting with the new kinds of song lyrics, questioning them, making sure they were heard correctly, welcoming or disdaining the changes and feeling the need to express

[111] Inglis, "Men of Ideas? Popular Music, Anti-Intellectualism and the Beatles," *passim.*

their opinions. In fact, the letters represent a maturation in the magazine's readers over time; as the Beatles' songs became more intellectual, so did the fans in their letters.

Meanwhile, there were never any letters about the representation of gender explicitly. This could be in part due to the timeline of feminism and the development of gender theory, as well as the socio-economic class of and access to higher education available to Beatle People. Women at the time would not have had the vocabulary to question the Beatles' changing approaches to gender in their lyrics, regardless of how they felt about the songs. This is the second key reason why claiming that the decline in the Beatles' lyrical feminism over time had a negative impact on their female fans is inaccurate, because claiming such would be an exhibition of presentism. With historical perspective, scholars today can identify the issues with rock and roll's connections to misogyny, which the Beatles demonstrated in songs throughout the entirety of their career. With decades of academic and cultural examination of the Beatles, multiple waves of feminism and the development of gender studies, it has become a standard reaction for scholars to observe that songs like 'Run For Your Life' are deeply misogynistic because they tell women they are their partner's property, suggest to men that they can dominate women, and are dangerous as such because they maintain hegemonic masculinity and impose gender barriers and binds on listeners. While this may be true today, it does not necessarily make it true for listeners in the 1960s.

Another weakness of the argument that the evolution of the Beatles' lyrics necessarily had a negative impact on the band's female fanbase cannot stand is the lack of first-hand information about the fans' opinions. The primary sources documenting fans' emotions, perspectives, and experiences with the Beatles and the band's evolution are scarce. *Beatles Book Monthly* is a rare source of the fans' opinions in their own words, and even then, the magazine was edited, and fans' responses were filtered before publication. The evidence available for the period between 1965 and 1966 suggests, however, that, overall, fans were unaffected, or at least not affected in a negative way, by the Beatles' changing approaches to gender in their lyrics. But this judgement remains provisional given the relative lack of primary evidence and the inherent difficulty in interpreting fans' emotional lives based on such little information. Nevertheless, further study of the existing first-hand accounts of the impact of the Beatles on their female fans presents an opportunity for other scholars, one that could greatly contribute to our understanding of Beatlemania, the Beatles, and their role in transforming popular culture in the 1960s and beyond.

3.4 Conclusion

This dissertation has explored the evolution of the Beatles' lyrics focusing on gender. Placing their work in social and historical context, it has examined the shifting relationship between the Beatles and their largely female fanbase. The questions this thesis focused on were two-fold: 1) how did the Beatles' lyrical approaches to gender change over time, and what insight does this give historians into how the Beatles shaped history, specifically in connection to their involvement with the counterculture, and 2) given the Beatles' quasi-religious, young female fanbase, how did the band's evolution of portrayal and representation of gender impact their fans? In addressing these questions, I have employed historical, musicological and gender theory lenses to the Beatles music, fanbase, and historical context in order to provide the interdisciplinary approach this cultural study requires.

My close examination of the Beatles' music released between 1965 and 1966 unveils an intricate ebb and flow of the band's lyrical approaches to gender. This examination calls for a recognition of the changes the Beatles incurred outside of their lyric writing transitions, including their advancing instrumentation and recording technology, their retreat from the public eye in response to their unprecedented fame, and the shift from seeing the band as a collective unit to identifying individual members' contributions. At the beginning of this pivotal period, the band matured in their articulation of romance and understanding of women as autonomous beings, using their life experiences and developing song writing techniques to produce uniquely feminist songs like "Ticket to Ride" and "Drive My Car." These songs were quickly overshadowed, however, by songs with a recurring lyrical theme that belittled the intellectual capabilities of women, such as "Think For Yourself" and "She Said She Said." Similar shifts are seen to varying degrees in many facets of the Beatles' thematic range between 1965 and 1966, including: their idealisation of and disillusionment with romance; jealousy in relationships versus acceptance of past and future partners, willingness to understand or work through conflict in relationships; and recognition of their partners' desires and needs. Further, their portrayal of women outside of romantic relationships also fluctuated during this time, including their portrayal of women as non-sexual beings, as earth-mothers, and as intellectually inferior.

Meanwhile, the band's lyrical thematic range evolved throughout this time to decreasingly include songs about romance, signaling a move away from placing women at the forefront of their music to pushing women to the periphery. This structure resembles other work of countercultural artists in the late 1960s, whereas the band's earlier lyrical focus

on women made them more accessible, relatable, and androgynous to their young female fanbase. Instead, by the end of this period, the Beatles were replicating the counterculture's stereotypical portrayals of women, boxing femininity into four common tropes: the sexually promiscuous tease, the earth mother, the innocent, childlike virgin and the spiritual goddess. In this way, the band's retreat from relying on romance for lyrical themes and increase in philosophical songs also changed their image from a feminine or androgynous band to more masculine, as was the typical image of rock and roll and countercultural artists of the time.

It would seem that the Beatles' overall transition into more masculine figures with songs less relatable to or celebratory of women would have had a negative impact on the Beatles' fanbase. However, my close reading of the *Beatles Book Monthly* magazine's fan-led sections indicates otherwise. Instead, as seen in the fan polls and the section "Letters From Beatle People," fans were eager to participate in and interact with the band's evolution, not only forming and expressing their own opinions of the band's new thematic range, but also matching the band's maturation in their articulations. Considering the common gendering of passivity as feminine and activity as masculine, physicality as feminine and cerebral as masculine, the increase in fan participation with the Beatles' evolving music in *Beatles Book Monthly* rejects stereotypical concepts of female rock and roll fans. Further, as the Beatles progressed into their public role as "men of ideas," their female listeners continued to follow them, admire them, and derive the same empowerment from them as when they were presenting as a more feminine band.

A presentist argument would dictate the Beatles' decline in feminism in the latter half of their career would have had a negative impact on their female fanbase, and this argument is what I came into this dissertation prepared to make. However, historical primary evidence suggests the opposite. *Beatles Book Monthly* offers a glimpse into the minds of Beatles fans and is a beautiful crystalisation of their passion for the band, bringing humanity and emotion to the "hysterical" phenomenon of Beatlemania. This magazine brings rare insight into the evolving opinions of Beatle Maniacs, insight that is often overlooked by Beatles scholars. Through *Beatles Book Monthly*, from the fans themselves, we learn that Beatle fans continued to feel empowered by their favourite band even when their idols sang songs that portrayed their gender negatively.

The Beatles empowered their female fans because their fans claimed them as their own. The band's original androgynous image and feminine sound enticed young women both cerebrally, as they could relate to the band's songs, and physically, as the band's live

shows created a space for female fans to release their inhibitions and express their emotions without hesitation or reserve. In this way, Beatlemania empowered its participants by allowing them to take up space, physically and verbally at the band's public appearances and intellectually as they made headlines across the world for their "hysteria" and led scholars and religious leaders to attempt making sense of the phenomenon. Following the band's rapid evolution through 1965 and 1966, Beatle fans were not discouraged by their favourite band's transition into more masculine figures with a more masculine thematic range. Instead, they used the empowered platform built by the Beatles' early work to continue taking up space, rejecting and transcending the infantalising teenybopper stereotype placed upon them by mainstream society and the numerous sexist tropes placed upon them by countercultural society.

This thesis, then, contributes to what I hope will be a reevaluation of Beatles scholarship that will, finally, give the participants of Beatlemania the closer examination they deserve. Without their fans, the Beatles would not have had the opportunity to revolutionise popular music. The band's young female fans are responsible for the elevation of the Beatles to this day, the reason we continue to discuss the band on personal and academic levels. Beatlemania made the Beatles. The Beatles' significance does not necessarily lie solely with its four members and their work, but rather how their work made people feel, react and think. To truly understand the impact of the Beatles is to understand the importance of their fans—and especially their fans' emotions—in their success. It is imperative, then, that scholars begin to centre the Beatles' fans at the historical and sociological story of the band because it will no longer suffice to simply say that the Beatles changed the world. Whose world did they change and how did they change it? Enough about the Beatles, what about the Beatle People?

APPENDIX

Release:	Song:	Lyrical Theme:
Single: Oct 1962	Love Me Do	Love - courtship, idealisation
	PS I Love You	Love - idealisation
Single: Jan 1963	Please Please Me	Love - idealisation
	Ask Me Why	Love - idealisation
Please Please Me, March 1963	I Saw Her Standing There	Love - courtship, idealisation
	Misery	Love - loss
	Anna (Go to Him)	Cover, love - loss, woman with another man
	Chains	Cover, love - possessive
	Boys	Cover, love - idealisation
	Ask Me Why	See previous listing
	Please Please Me	See previous listing
	Love Me Do	See previous listing
	PS I Love You	See previous listing
	Baby Its You	Cover, love - idealisation
	Do You Want to Know a Secret	Love - idealisation
	A Taste of Honey	Cover, love - idealisation
	There's a Place	Love - idealisation
	Twist and Shout	Dancing, love - courtship
Single: April 1963	From Me to You	Love - idealisation
	Thank You Girl	Cover, love - idealisation
Single: Aug 1963	She Loves You	Love - courtship, idealisation
	I'll Get You	Cover, love - courtship, idealisation, possessive
With the Beatles, November 1963	It Won't Be Long	Love - courtship, idealisation
	All I've Got to Do	Love - idealisation
	All My Loving	Love - idealisation
	Don't Bother Me	Love - loss
	Little Child	Dancing, love - courtship
	Till There Was You	Cover, love - idealisation
	Please Mr. Postman	Cover, love - idealisation
	Roll Over Beethoven	Cover, non-romantic
	Hold Me Tight	Love - courtship, idealisation
	You Really Got a Hold on Me	Cover, love - possessive
	I Wanna Be Your Man	Love - courtship
	Devil In Her Heart	Cover, love - possessive, pain, abusive partner
	Not a Second Time	Love - pain, abusive partner
	Money (That's What I Want)	Cover, non-romantic
Single: Nov 1963	I Want to Hold Your Hand	Love - courtship
	This Boy	Love - loss, woman with another man
Single: March 1964	Can't Buy Me Love	Wealth, love - idealisation
	You Can't Do That	Love - possessive, woman with another man
Long Tall Sally	Long Tall Sally	Cover, partying, attractive woman

	I Call Your Name	Love - loss
	Slow Down	Cover, love - potential loss, woman with another man
	Matchbox	Cover, love - courtship
Single: July 1964	A Hard Day's Night	Love - idealisation
	Things We Said Today	Love - idealisation
A Hard Day's Night, July 1964	A Hard Day's Night	See previous listing
	I Should Have Known Better	Love - idealisation
	If I Fell	Love - courtship, idealisation, narrator references his previous partner(s)
	I'm Just Happy to Dance With You	Dancing, love - courtship
	And I Love Her	Love - idealisation
	Tell Me Why	Love - pain, abusive partner
	Can't Buy Me Love	See previous listing
	Any Time at All	Friendship or love - courtship
	I'll Cry Instead	Love - loss
	Things We Said Today	Love - idealisation
	When I Get Home	Love - idealisation
	You Can't Do That	See previous listing
	I'll Be Back	Love - loss, idealisation
Single, Nov. 1964	I Feel Fine	Love - idealisation
	She's a Woman	Love - idealisation, possessive
Beatles for Sale, December 1964	No Reply	Love - loss, woman with another man
	I'm a Loser	Love - loss
	Baby's in Black	Love - loss, woman with another man
	Rock and Roll Music	Cover, non-romantic
	I'll Follow the Sun	Love - noncommittal narrator
	Mr. Moonlight	Cover, love - idealisation
	Kansas City (Hey! Hey! Hey!)	Cover, love - reunion
	Eight Days a Week	Love - idealisation
	Words of Love	Cover, love - idealisation
	Honey Don't	Cover, love - pain, abusive partner
	Every Little Thing	Love - idealisation
	I Don't Want to Spoil the Party	Love - potential loss
	What You're Doing	Love - pain, abusive partner
	Everybody's Trying to be my Baby	Cover, love - noncommittal narrator, courtship
Single, April 1965	Ticket to Ride	Love – loss, novel for recognising woman's needs
	Yes it is	Love - courtship, idealisation, narrator references his previous partner(s)
Single, July 1965	Help!	Non-romantic
	I'm Down	Love - pain, abusive partner
Help!, August 1965	The Night Before	Love - loss, idealisation
	You've Got to Hide Your Love Away	Love - loss
	I Need You	Love - idealisation

	Another Girl	Love - noncommittal narrator
	You're Going to Lose that Girl	Love - courtship, novel for being directed at another male for not treating his partner well
	Act Naturally	Cover, non-romantic
	It's Only Love	Love - idealisation, pain
	You Like Me Too Much	Love - idealisation, possessive
	Tell Me What You See	Love - courtship, idealisation
	I've Just Seen a Face	Love - courtship, idealisation
	Yesterday	Love - loss
	Dizzy Miss Lizzy	Love - courtship
Single Dec. 1965	We Can Work it Out	Love - potential loss
	Day Tripper	Love - failed courtship
Rubber Soul, December 1965	Drive My Car	Non-romantic, novel for being the first song where the woman's relationship status is unimportant
	Norwegian Wood	Love - failed courtship
	You Won't See Me	Love - loss, questions woman's maturity/intellect
	Nowhere Man	Non-romantic
	Think For Yourself	Questions woman's maturity/intellect
	The Word	Non-romantic ("love" is used in this song in non-romantic terms), non-gendered
	Michelle	Love - courtship, idealisation
	What Goes On	Love - pain, woman with another man
	Girl	Love - pain, abusive partner
	I'm Looking Through You	Love - potential loss, questions woman's maturity/intellect
	In My Life	Love - idealisation, narrator references his previous partner(s)
	Wait	Love - potential loss
	If I Needed Someone	Love - noncommittal narrator, courtship
	Run for your Life	Love - possessive, woman with another man
Single May 1966	Paperback Writer	Non-romantic
	Rain	Non-romantic, non-gendered
Revolver, August 1966	Taxman	Non-romantic
	Eleanor Rigby	Non-romantic, woman’s relationship status is unimportant
	I'm Only Sleeping	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Love You To	Questions woman's maturity/intellect
	Here, There, and Everywhere	Love - idealisation
	Yellow Submarine	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	She Said She Said	Questions woman's maturity/intellect
	Good Day Sunshine	Love - idealisation
	And Your Bird Can Sing	Questions woman's maturity/intellect
	For No One	Love - loss
	Doctor Robert	Non-romantic
	I Want to Tell You	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Got to Get You Into My Life	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Tomorrow Never Knows	Non-romantic, non-gendered

Single: Aug 1966	Eleanor Rigby	See previous listing
	Yellow Submarine	See previous listing
Single: Feb 1967	Strawberry Fields Forever	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Penny Lane	Non-romantic, non-gendered
Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, June 1967	Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	With a Little Help from My Friends	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds	Non-romantic, woman's relationship status is unimportant
	Getting Better	Non-romantic
	Fixing a Hole	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	She's Leaving Home	Non-romantic, woman's relationship status is unimportant
	Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite!	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Within You Without You	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	When I'm Sixty Four	Love - idealisation
	Lovely Rita	Love - courtship
	Good Morning Good Morning	Non-romantic
	Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (Reprise)	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	A Day in the Life	Non-romantic, non-gendered
Single: July 1967	All You Need is Love	Non-romantic ("love" is used in this song in non-romantic terms), non-gendered
	Baby You're a Rich Man	Non-romantic
Single: Nov 1967	Hello Goodbye	Love - potential loss
	I Am the Walrus	Non-romantic
Magical Mystery Tour Double EP, Dec 1967	Magical Mystery Tour	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Your Mother Should Know	Non-romantic
	I Am the Walrus	See previous listing
	The Fool on the Hill	Non-romantic
	Flying	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Blue Jay Way	Non-romantic, non-gendered
Single: March 1968	Lady Madonna	Non-romantic, woman's relationship status is unimportant
	The Inner Light	Non-romantic, non-gendered
Single: Aug 1968	Hey Jude	Non-romantic
	Revolution	Non-romantic
The Beatles (White Album), November 1968	Back in the USSR	Non-romantic
	Dear Prudence	Non-romantic, woman's relationship status is unimportant
	Glass Onion	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da	Love - idealisation
	Wild Honey Pie	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	The Continuing Story of Bungalow Bill	Non-romantic
	While My Guitar Gently Weeps	Love - loss
	Happiness is a Warm Gun	Non-romantic

	Martha My Dear	Love - idealisation, questions woman's maturity/intellect
	I'm So Tired	Non-romantic
	Blackbird	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Piggies	Non-romantic
	Rocky Raccoon	Love - loss, woman with another man
	Don't Pass Me By	Love - potential loss
	Why Don't We Do it in the Road	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	I Will	Love - idealisation
	Julia	Non-romantic, woman's relationship status is unimportant
	Birthday	Non-romantic, small reference to courtship
	Yer Blues	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Mother Nature's Son	Non-romantic
	Everybody's Got Something to Hide Except Me and My Monkey	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Sexy Sadie	Non-romantic, questions woman's maturity/intellect
	Helter Skelter	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Long, Long, Long	Love - idealisation, narrator references his previous partner(s)
	Revolution	See previous listing
	Honey Pie	Love - loss
	Savoy Truffle	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Cry Baby Cry	Non-romantic, questions woman's maturity/intellect
	Revolution 9	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Good Night	Non-romantic, non-gendered
Yellow Submarine LP, January 1969	Yellow Submarine	See previous listing
	Only A Northern Song	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	All Together Now	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Hey Bulldog	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	It's All Too Much	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	All You Need is Love	See previous listing
	(Side Two: Orchestral Film Score)	n/a
Single: April 1969	Get Back	Non-romantic
	Don't Let Me Down	Love - idealisation
Single: May 1969	The Ballad of John and Yoko	Non-romantic
	Old Brown Shoe	Love - idealisation
Abbey Road, September 1969	Come Together	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Something	Love - idealisation
	Maxwell's Silver Hammer	Non-romantic
	Oh! Darling	Love - idealisation
	Octopus's Garden	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	I Want You (She's so Heavy)	Love - courtship
	Here Comes the Sun	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Because	Non-romantic, non-gendered

	You Never Give Me Your Money	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Sun King	Non-romantic
	Mean Mr. Mustard	Non-romantic
	Polythene Pam	Non-romantic, woman's relationship status is unimportant
	She Came in through the Bathroom Window	Questions woman's maturity/intellect
	Golden Slumbers	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Carry That Weight	Non-romantic
	The End	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Her Majesty	Love - courtship
Single: Oct 1969	Come Together	See previous listing
	Something	See previous listing
Single: March 1970	Let It Be	Non-romantic, novel for having a woman offer the narrator advice
	You Know My Name (Look Up the Number)	Non-romantic, non-gendered
Let It Be, May 1970	Two of Us	Love - idealisation
	Dig a Pony	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Across the Universe	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	I Me Mine	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Dig It	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	Let It Be	See previous listing
	Maggie Mae	(Cover) Love - courtship
	I've Got a Feeling	Non-romantic
	One After 909	Love - courtship
	The Long and Winding Road	Non-romantic, non-gendered
	For You Blue	Love - idealisation
	Get Back	See previous listing

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